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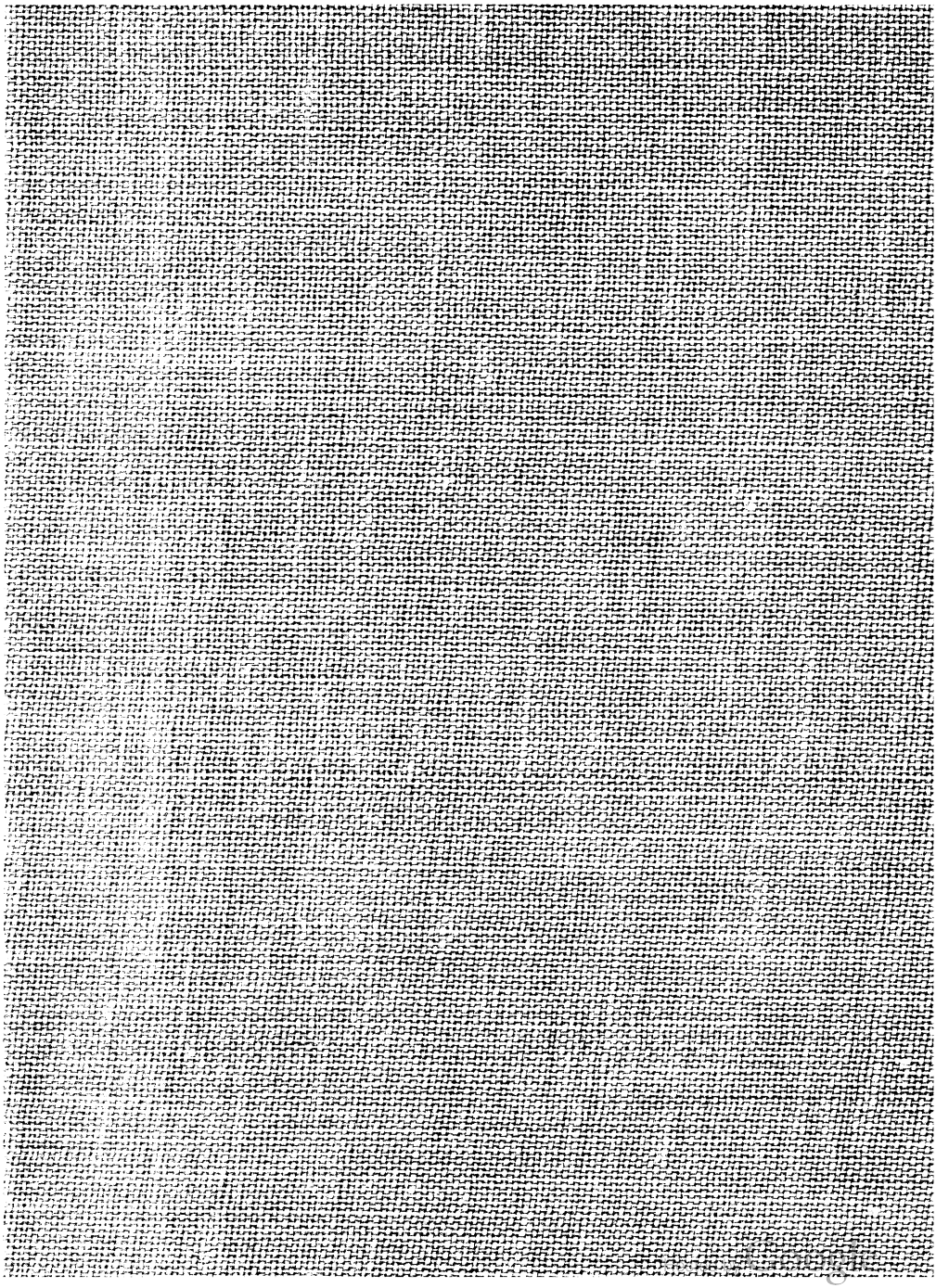

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Twentieth Century Series

SHAKSPERE'S

TRAGEDY OF

MACBETH

EDITED
WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

RICHARD JONES, PH. D.
PROFESSOR OF LITERATURE IN SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

NEW YORK
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY
1899

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PREFACE.

In this edition of the tragedy of *Macbeth* there is included the customary linguistic explanatory matter, and, in addition, some consideration of the theme of the tragedy and of the significance of the play as a whole. The desirability of some thought on the theme of the play, on the part of the preparatory-school student even, is suggested by the character of some of the questions set by many colleges and universities in their entrance examinations on the English texts. Indeed, the only question on *Macbeth* set by Vassar at the last entrance examination was, "Does Macbeth's instigation to crime come from within or from without? On what do you base your opinion?" And among the recommendations of late made by Harvard to secondary-school teachers of English is the following, "Pupils should of course be made to understand what they read as they go along; but attention should be fixed, not on unimportant details of substance or of style, but on the significance and spirit of the whole. In studying a tragedy of Shakspere, for example, far less time should be given to the discussion of details than to the march of events, the play of character, the main lines of the plot, the significance of the whole as a work of genius."

The discussion herewith given of Macbeth's instigation to crime and of the significance of the play as a whole is designed to be stimulating and suggestive

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rather than dogmatic and exhaustive. It takes the form of an exposition and a comparison of the views of various critics, with some attempt at an explanation of the existing extraordinary differences of critical opinion respecting the theme of the play, the characters of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth and their relations to each other, the significance of the Weird Sisters and of the play as a whole,—respecting, in short, all of the necessary questions of the play.

Every reader of the following pages will have access, it is hoped, to the works there quoted and discussed. Every school where this play is read will possess, it is assumed, Abbott's *Shakespearian Grammar* (The Macmillan Company), and that inexhaustible treasure store of the student and of the editor of Shakspere, the *Variorum* editions of Dr. Furness (J. B. Lippincott Company). Every school is advised to possess also Butcher's *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art* (The Macmillan Company), the enduring work of an exact scholar, yet withal most stimulating and suggestive,—the greater portion entirely within the comprehension of the preparatory-school student.

The acknowledgments of the editor are due to the authors and to the publishers of the works quoted so freely in the following pages.

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY, *December 20, 1898.*

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THE TRAGEDY OF MACBETH.

INTRODUCTION.

The Ideal Hero of Tragedy.

The theme of a perfect tragedy, according to Aristotle, is not the downfall of an utter villain. A plot of this kind, he says (in the *Poetics*), would doubtless satisfy the moral sense, but it would excite neither tragic pity nor fear; for pity is aroused by unmerited misfortune, fear by the misfortune of a man like ourselves. And, therefore, the ruin of a monster of iniquity is not properly a theme for tragedy.

Nor, according to the *Poetics*, is the spectacle of a good man falling from prosperity into adversity a theme for tragedy. Such a spectacle, says Aristotle, simply shocks us. And nothing, he continues, can be more alien to the spirit of tragedy than the spectacle of a bad man rising from adversity to prosperity. There remains, then, as the proper theme for tragedy, the misfortunes of a man between these extremes, a man neither eminently good and just nor yet falling into adversity through deliberate vice or utter depravity, a man of great repute and prosperity, whose misfortune is brought about through some fatal error in conduct or flaw of character or overpowering desire to which he succumbs.

This fatal error in conduct is, according to the Aristotelian view, not of necessity morally culpable,—it may,

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indeed, be so linked with noblest qualities that, the tragic course once entered upon, the very virtues of the victim hurry him forward to his ruin. This phase of the Aristotelian view of tragedy, however,—that is, the degree of moral culpability in tragic flaws of character,—need not here be enlarged upon. It is sufficient to note the stress laid by Aristotle upon the necessity of a warm, human sympathy with the tragic victim as the condition of the higher and distinctively tragic effects. "It is only" —says ten Brink,* illustrating the theory of Aristotle—"when we are able to put ourselves in the place of the suffering victim, when we behold in his fate but a particular instance of a common destiny, that our souls are stirred with genuine tragic sympathy." "The tragic sufferer," says Butcher † in his exposition of Aristotle's theory of poetry, "is a man like ourselves, and on that likeness the whole effect of tragedy, as described in the *Poetics*, hinges. Without it he would fail to win our sympathy." "No 'faultily faultless' hero, then," he continues, "any more than a consummate villain, can inspire so vital a sympathy as the hero whose weakness and whose strength alike bring him within the range of our common humanity."

This human sympathy with the sufferings of the tragic victim does not imply any approval of the error in conduct or flaw of character from which the tragic result inevitably follows. On the contrary, our sense of justice often imperiously demands in the *dénouement* a portrayal of the avoidless retribution, the sight of which yet stirs our intensest pity.

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* *Fünf Vorlesungen über Shakspere*, B. ten Brink, Strassburg, 1893. An English translation is published by Henry Holt and Company, New York.

† *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art*, S. H. Butcher, Macmillan and Company, New York, 1895.

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But though the flaw of character in the tragic victim may be such as to call forth our unequivocal condemnation, yet, to be properly the protagonist of a tragedy, the tragic victim must be portrayed with so much of human nature in him that we are able to identify ourselves with him and to make his misfortunes our own, that the spectacle of his doom arouses our eager interest and heartfelt pity, that our profoundest sympathy is enlisted in his tragic destiny, his sufferings and his ruin.

Does the reader thus sympathize with the chief characters in the play of *Macbeth?* If not, then the play is to him, according to the Aristotelian view, but a tale of horrors, lacking wholly the 'distinctive mark' of tragedy.

The Theme of Macbeth.

There is wide divergence of critical opinion respecting the chief characters in *Macbeth* and respecting the theme and the significance of the play. 'Criminal ambition and its consequences' is, obviously, 'the central theme' of the tragedy; but is it the development of this ambition or simply its consequence? Does the play present the cause, or origin, and the growth of this ambition or merely its inevitable results? Is the reader present at 'the determining moment' of Macbeth's career? Does he see 'the dawning' of his passion, 'the source' from which the impulse to evil has come, and 'the commencement of his descent'? Does he become 'interested' in observing 'the gradual course' of Macbeth's development until there is 'a complete change' in the original character? Or, on the contrary, has 'the essential surrender of spirit' already taken place when the play opens? And does the reader see simply 'its realisation in life and in fact'? Obviously, the nature of the reader's 'interest,' and the intensity of his sym-

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pathy as well, is determined by the point of view from which he regards the play.

Therefore, in defining the theme of the play, it is a matter of primary importance to determine the character of Macbeth at the time when the play opens. And yet there is here an element of uncertainty, introduced by the 'rehandling' which the text suffered at the hands of players before it was printed in 1623. Brandes * speaks feelingly of "the shamefully mutilated form in which this tragedy has been handed down to us." "Who knows," he exclaims, "what it may have been when it came from Shakespeare's own hand! The text we possess, which was not printed till long after the poet's death, is clipped, pruned, and compressed for acting purposes. We can feel distinctly where the gaps occur, but that is of no avail." Ulrici holds that fundamentally different conceptions of the character of Lady Macbeth also may each be justified from the play. This defective state of the text opens the way for discussion, not merely as to what Shakspere meant by what he wrote, but also discussion of the fundamental question as to what Shakspere did in fact write.

In the play as it has come down to us, however, the references to Macbeth in the opening scenes present him in a wholly favorable light. He is 'valour's minion,' 'Bellona's bridegroom,' the subduer of his country's foes within and without, the hero of the army, the 'noble Macbeth' of his king. In Scene iii. he 'starts' and is 'rapt withal' at the prediction of the witches. He entertains that 'suggestion' whose horrid image makes his seated heart knock at his ribs against the use of nature. His thought of murder is as yet but 'fantastical,' but in

* *William Shakespeare A Critical Study*, George Brandes, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1898.

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Scene iv. he calls upon the stars to hide their fires, lest light should see his black and deep desires. What should the reader here assume? That a hitherto noble man has come under the influence of outside forces of evil? That, in the words of Dowden, 'the sins of past centuries taint the atmosphere of to-day'? That 'we move through the world subject to accumulated forces of good and evil outside ourselves'? That the theme of the play is the influence of these malignant forces of evil over a noble and heroic soul?

In Scene v. Macbeth's only answer to Lady Macbeth's proposition, 'He that's coming Must be provided for,' is, 'We will speak further.' But in Scene vii. we learn from the lips of Lady Macbeth that Macbeth had broken this enterprise to her, apparently at some time before the opening of the play, that he had then deeply sworn to kill the king. She, as she passionately asserts, 'would have dash'd the brains out' of the babe smiling in her face, 'had I so sworn as you Have done to this.' Was the 'noble Macbeth' of Scene ii., then, not a heroic and noble soul? Was he who 'started' in Scene iii. at the 'fantastical' thought of murder already passionately committed to the crime? The black and deep desires, wherefore he, in Scene iv., implored the stars to hide their fires,—had they been whispered to his wife ere he, 'valour's minion,' went to battle against the traitor and the foreign foe? The thought seems impossible, and yet, according to the judgment of many critics, a judgment based on the 'time-analysis' of the text, there is but one answer, Yes.

The reader here encounters the fundamental difficulty in determining the theme or the significance of the play, that is, in determining whether the play portrays the cause, or origin, and the growth of Macbeth's ambition, 'the commencement' of his descent, and 'the source' of his impulse to evil; or whether, on the con-

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trary, there is portrayed merely 'the realisation in life' of a criminal ambition, the impulse to which is not disclosed.

"Nor time nor place
Did then adhere and yet you would make both."

When was it* that time and place did not 'adhere' and Macbeth would yet 'make both'? When did he break this enterprise to his wife? 'At some period earlier than the opening of the play,' says Boas †; and

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* The 'time-analysis' of the play, according to Daniel, is as follows, "Time of the Play nine days represented on the stage, and intervals.
Day 1. Act I. sc. i. to iii.
" 2. Act I. sc. iv. to vii.
" 3. Act II. sc. i. to iv.
An interval, say a couple of weeks.
" 4. Act III. sc. i. to v.
[Act III. sc. vi., an impossible time.]
" 5. Act IV. sc. i.
Professor Wilson supposes an interval of certainly not more than two days between Days 5 and 6; Paton marks two days. The general breathless haste of the play is, I think, against any such interval between Macbeth's purpose and its execution.
" 6. Act IV. sc. ii.
An interval. Ross's journey to England. Paton allows two weeks.
" 7. Act IV. sc. iii., Act V. sc. i.
An interval. Malcolm's return to Scotland. Three weeks, according to Paton.
" 8. Act V. sc. ii. and iii.
" 9. Act V. sc. iv. to viii."

See, however, the conclusion of Köster that the scene referred to by Lady Macbeth has been omitted from our 'rehandled' text, and see also the discussion in Butcher (p. 277), minimizing the importance of the 'time-analysis' of a play,—"Shakespeare deals freely, and as he will, with space and time."

† *Shakspere and his Predecessors*, F. S. Boas: Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1896.

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if the text, as it has come down to us, be correct here, there clearly has been no time since Macbeth's return from the war when it could be said that time and place did not adhere, for it is still the evening of the day on which Duncan said to Macbeth,

> "From hence to Inverness
> And bind us further to you."

Therefore, Moulton,* on the ground that "the reference can only be to a period before the commencement of the play," has written, "In a picture of human characters, great in their scale, overwhelmed in moral ruin, the question of absorbing interest is the commencement of the descent, and the source from which the impulse to evil has come. This, in the present case, Shakespeare has carefully hidden from us: before the play opens the essential surrender of spirit has taken place, and all that we are allowed to see is its realisation in life and fact."

Butcher, on the contrary, has written, "The ancient stage furnishes us with no such complete instance of character-development as we have, for example, in Macbeth. It is the peculiar delight of the moderns to follow the course of such an evolution, to be present at the determining moment of a man's career, to watch the dawning of a passion, the shaping of a purpose, and to pursue the deed to its final accomplishment. We desire not only to know what a man was, and how he came to be it, but to be shown each step in the process, each link in the chain, and we are the more interested if we find that the gradual course of the dramatic movement has wrought a complete change in the original character." Brandes, however, apparently with a sense that some

* *Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist*, R. G. Moulton. At the Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1897.

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links are lacking in the account of 'the dawning' of Macbeth's ambition and of the steps in the process, has written, "In certain places omissions are distinctly felt. Lady Macbeth (I. v.) proposes to her husband that he shall murder Duncan. He gives no answer to this. In the next scene the King arrives. In the next again, Macbeth's deliberations as to whether or not he is to commit the murder are all over, and he is only thinking how it can be done with impunity. When he wavers, and says to his wife, 'I dare do all that may become a man; who dares do more is none,' her answer shows how much is wanting here:—

> 'When you durst do it, then you were a man;
> And, to be more than what you were, you would
> Be so much more the man. Nor time nor place
> Did then adhere, and yet you would make both.'

We spectators or readers know nothing of all this. There has not even been time for the shortest conversation between husband and wife." Köster,* also, suggests that a scene has been omitted in which Macbeth and

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* In the *Jahrbuch der Deutschen Shakespeare-Gesellschaft*, vol. i, 1865, Köster suggests that Lady Macbeth's *then* refers to a scene "die in unserem Text *ausgefallen* ist." He suggests that the missing scene was possibly between Scenes v. and vi. He is persuaded that our 'rehandled' text was cut down by a bungler, inasmuch as the murder now takes place too soon. Moulton and Boas and Chambers and all who make Lady Macbeth's *then* refer to a time preceding the opening of the play are not thus troubled by the rapidity of the development of Macbeth's ambition.

"I may ask the reader who doubts the remarkable alterations to which this play has been subjected, to examine the following incomplete lines at points where compression by omission seems to have taken place, i. 3. 103; i. 4. 35; ii. 1. 16; ii. 1. 24; ii. 3. 120; iii. 2. 155; iv. 3. 15; and to compare the later additions by Davenant and others, as given in my article in *Anglia*, vol. vii."—*F. G. Fleay.*

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Lady Macbeth discuss the murder, a suggestion to which Ulrici assents.

In fullness of presentation of the motive and the development of Macbeth's ambition, Shakspere's *Macbeth* differs markedly from the *Chronicle* of Holinshed. This difference is adduced by ten Brink in support of his interpretation of the solution intended by Shakspere to "one of the most difficult problems that any tragic poet has ever propounded." In Holinshed there is given a detailed account of the mental processes which determine Macbeth to kill the king. After the close of the war 'Macbeth and Banquho' journeyed towards Fores, 'sporting by the waie togither,' when suddenly there met them 'three women in strange and wild apparell, resembling creatures of elder world,' who saluted them as king hereafter and father of kings to be. This prediction was for a time a matter of jest between Macbeth and Banquo, "insomuch that Banquho would call Mackbeth in iest, king of Scotland; and Mackbeth againe would call him in sport likewise, the father of manie kings." But 'shortlie after' the thane of Cawdor was condemned of treason and his 'lands, liuings, and offices' were given to Macbeth.

"The same night after, at supper, Banquho iested with him and said; Now Mackbeth thou hast obteined those things which the two former sisters prophesied, there remaineth onelie for thee to purchase that which the third said should come to passe. Wherevpon Mackbeth reuoluing the thing in his mind, began euen then to deuise how he might atteine to the kingdome: but yet he thought with himselfe that he must tarie a time, which should aduance him thereto (by the diuine prouidence) as it had come to passe in his former preferment. But shortlie after it chanced that king Duncane, hauing two sonnes by his wife which was the daughter of Siward

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earle of Northumberland, he made the elder of them called Malcolme prince of Cumberland, as it were thereby to appoint him his successor in the kingdome, immediatlie after his deceasse. Mackbeth sore troubled herewith, for that he saw by this means his hope sore hindered (where, by the old lawes of the realme, the ordinance was, that if he that should succeed were not of able age to take the charge vpon himselfe, he that was next of bloud vnto him should be admitted) he began to take counsell how he might vsurpe the kingdome by force, hauing a iust quarell so to doo (as he tooke the matter) for that Duncane did what in him lay to defraud him of all maner of title and claime, which he might in time to come, pretend vnto the crowne.

"The woords of the three weird sisters also (of whom before ye haue heard) greatlie incouraged him herevnto, but speciallie his wife lay sore vpon him to attempt the thing, as she that was verie ambitious, burning in vnquenchable desire to beare the name of a queene. At length therefore, communicating his purposed intent with his trustie friends, amongst whome Banquho was the chiefest, vpon confidence of their promised aid, he slue the king at Enuerns, or (as some say) at Botgosuane, in the sixt yeare of his reigne. Then hauing a companie about him of such as he had made priuie to his enterprise, he caused himselfe to be proclamed king, and foorthwith went vnto Scone, where (by common consent) he receiued the inuesture of the kingdome according to the accustomed maner. The bodie of Duncane was first conueied vnto Elgine, & there buried in kinglie wise; but afterwards it was remoued and conueied vnto Colmekill, and there laid in a sepulture amongst his predecessors, in the yeare after the birth of our Sauiour, 1046."

In Holinshed the reader sees the development of the thought of murder. He sees also a certain justification.

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The claim of Macbeth to the throne was in reality better than that of Duncan, and Duncan was in truth doing 'what in him lay' to defraud Macbeth of 'all maner of title and claime' which he might in time to come pretend unto the crown. Macbeth thus did, in fact, have 'a iust quarell so to doo.' His act is human and comprehensible, if not justifiable. He violated no laws of hospitality. He attacked his enemy in the open field. In his deed there was no element of baseness, of personal dishonor, such as would be involved in the violation of nature's armistice and the sacred obligations of a host, in the murder of a just and gracious and trustful king under his own roof. The reader doubtless sympathizes with him, recalling the customs of a rude and heroic age.

As the comments of Butcher on the play of *Macbeth* are merely incidental illustrations in an interpretation of the Aristotelian theory of tragedy, he does not enter into the discussion as to whether or no there are 'omissions' in Shakspere's account of Macbeth's 'character-development.' But he surely feels no want of sympathy with the tragic victim, guilty though he be, and the play satisfies fully for him the Aristotelian conditions as to the nature and function of tragedy, the contemplation of which purges the soul through the emotions of pity and fear. Illustrating the Aristotelian view that the tragic hero is "a man of noble nature, like ourselves in elemental feelings and emotions"; that the disaster that wrecks his life may be traced not to deliberate wickedness, but to some great error or frailty"; that "the overthrow of the utter villain," though it satisfy the moral sense, is yet a catastrophe "lacking in the higher and distinctively tragic qualities," Butcher has written, "Macbeth does not start with criminal purpose. In its original quality his nature was not devoid of nobility.

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But with him the ἁμαρτία, the primal defect, is the taint of ambition, which under the promptings of a stronger character than his own and a more vivid imagination works in him as a subtle poison. In a case such as this, tragic fear is heightened into awe, as we trace the growth of a mastering passion, which beginning in a fault or frailty enlarges itself in its successive stages, till the first false step has issued in crime, and the crime has engendered fresh crime. It is of the essence of a great tragedy to bring together the beginning and the end; to show the one implicit in the other. The intervening process disappears; the causal chain so unites the whole that the first ἁμαρτία bears the weight of the tragic result."

"In Hamlet, Othello, Lear, Macbeth, Coriolanus," he says, in another connection, "we have the ruin of noble natures through some defect of character. In infinitely various ways it has been shown that the most dramatic of motives is the process by which a frailty, or flaw of nature, grows and expands till it culminates in tragic disaster."

To recapitulate, then, the higher and distinctively tragic effects are present only when the reader's intense sympathy is enkindled for the tragic victim. Is the reader's sympathy thus at once awakened for the 'noble Macbeth' of the opening scenes as for a genuinely noble nature falling into ruin through the malignant influence of outside forces of evil or through an innate flaw of character or an overmastering passion; or is the reader's sympathy finally awakened for a tragic victim—the determining moment of whose career is not given and in whose character and fortune the reader's personal interest is therefore not awakened—by the appalling retribution, 'which avails as a partial atonement for his crimes'?

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Obviously, the nature and the intensity of the tragic effects are influenced by the conception of the reader as to the significance of the play; and, as obviously, the theme, or the significance of the play, is determined for each reader by the point of view from which it is regarded.

The Impulse to Evil, or the Tragic Fault.

"The question of absorbing interest," says Moulton, referring to the spectacle of great characters overwhelmed in moral ruin, "is the commencement of the descent and the source from which the impulse to evil has come." The nature and the intensity of the reader's sympathy is doubtless determined by his conception of the tragic victim's impulse to evil or the nature of his tragic fault. It is evident, for example, that Dowden and Butcher are affected diversely by the fate of Macbeth. He who lays such stress upon "the vague yet mastering inspiration of crime received from the Witches," who has said* that "their evil spells have already wrought upon his blood," that "the sins of past centuries taint the atmosphere of to-day," that man is caught up at times upon a current that bears him "towards darkness and cold and death,"—he has also said, "At the outset Macbeth possesses no real fidelity to things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely." The reader may well pause to consider whether Dowden's reflection on the original character of Macbeth, which takes away so greatly from the pathos of the play, is suggested inevitably by the text itself, or presumably by the author's general view of life. In any case the fate of Macbeth is palpably not so distinctively tragic to

* *Shakspere—His Mind and Art*, Edward Dowden, Harper and Brothers, New York.

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Dowden as it is to Butcher, who regards this fate as "the ruin of a noble nature through a defect of character," who has said, "Macbeth does not start with criminal purpose," "in a case such as this, tragic fear is heightened into awe, as we watch the growth of a mastering passion."

It is evident that the tragic situation in *Macbeth* appeals in widely different ways to different readers according to their conception of the original impulse to evil or of the nature of the victim's tragic fault. The significance of the play cannot be the same to Boas, who has written, "Of moral scruples, in the strict sense, he knows nothing," and to Brandes, who holds that "Macbeth is not by nature a bad man"; to Ulrici, who is persuaded that the Weird Sisters are introduced to be "the motives of the fall of so great and noble a mind as Macbeth's thus lessening his guilt," and to Gervinus, who looks upon them as "simply the outward embodiment of inward temptation"; to Brandl,* who says, "Macbeth would not have thought of attaining the crown without the prophecies of the witches," and to Moulton, who affirms that Macbeth "made the destiny which the Witches reveal."

These discordant views respecting the significance of the play of *Macbeth* doubtless result from want of agreement respecting Macbeth's tragic fault, that is, a want of agreement respecting the fundamental question whether this play is a tragedy of fate or of free will.

"The grand distinction of modern thought," Moulton has written, "is the predominance in it of moral ideas: they colour even its imagination; and if the Greeks carried their art-sense into morals, modern instincts have carried morals into art. In particular the

* *Shakspere*, Alois Brandl, Berlin, 1894.

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speculations raised by Christianity have cast the shadow of Sin over the whole universe. It has been said that the conception of Sin is unknown to the ancients, and that the word has no real equivalent in Latin or Classical Greek. The modern mind is haunted by it. Notions of Sin have invaded art, . . . The link between Sin and its retribution becomes a form of art-pleasure; and no dramatic effect is more potent in modern Drama than that which emphasizes the principle that whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap."

This point of view assumes the perfect freedom of man's will. Being free, he is responsible. Macbeth's tragic fault is a moral fault pure and simple. He, a free moral agent, sinned and therefore he must suffer. And no haunting query as to the primal cause of his tragic fault weighs on the heart of the reader whose mind is absorbed in "the interest of watching morals and art united in their treatment of Sin," to whom the observation of Nemesis as "the artistic link between sin and retribution" is a form of "art-pleasure."

With reference to this tragedy James Russell Lowell * has written, "The motive of the ancient drama is generally outside of it, while in the modern (at least in the English) it is necessarily within. Goethe . . . says that the distinction between the two is the difference between *sollen* and *wollen*, that is, between *must* and *would*. He means that in the Greek drama the catastrophe is foreordained by an inexorable Destiny, while the element of Freewill, and consequently of choice, is the very axis of the modern. The definition . . . has its limitations. . . . In the Spanish drama, for example, custom, loyalty, honor, and religion are as imperative and as inevitable as

* *Among my Books*, James Russell Lowell, Houghton, Mifflin and Co., Boston.

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doom. . . . In the modern tragedy, certainly in the four greatest of Shakespeare's tragedies, there is still something very like Destiny, only the place of it is changed. It is no longer above man, but in him; yet the catastrophe is as sternly foredoomed in the characters of Lear, Othello, Macbeth, and Hamlet as it could be by an infallible oracle. In *Macbeth*, indeed, the Weird Sisters introduce an element very like Fate."

The reader whose thought is arrested, as is Lowell's, by the element of Fate in the tragedy of *Macbeth* and by the problem of 'a foredoomed' catastrophe, is, even though he note but indifferently the artistic link between sin and retribution, profoundly stirred by distinctively tragic effects in another realm of ideas. He throbs with thoughts beyond the reaches of the soul.

To ten Brink and to Butcher, as to Lowell, there is in *Macbeth* an element of Fate. In their discussion of the theory of tragedy both have insisted that the tragic fault, which effects inevitably the tragic victim's ruin, is not in every case to be interpreted as primarily a moral fault alone. "A single great error," says Butcher, "whether morally culpable or not; a single great defect in a character otherwise noble,—each and all of these may carry with them the issues of life and death." He speaks of "a flaw of character that is not tainted by a vicious purpose," of "the shocks and blows of circumstance," in which we read the uncertainty of all human fortunes, of "the inherent one-sidedness of all human action in an imperfect world," of "a mere defect of judgment" working as potently as crime. "In the scheme of the universe a wholly unconscious error violates the law of perfection; it disturbs the moral order of the world." Sometimes, indeed, the very virtues of a man hurry him on to ruin. "Othello in the modern drama, Œdipus in the ancient—widely as they differ in moral guilt—are the

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two most conspicuous examples of ruin wrought by characters, noble indeed, but not without defects, acting in the dark, and, as it seemed, for the best."

In similar vein ten Brink defines the 'tragic fault' as 'simply the origin of suffering.' "The deed or deeds of the hero of tragedy which are the cause of his sufferings constitute," he says, "his tragic error, or, as they are pleased to term it in modern times, his tragic fault." "The expression would in itself," he continues, "not be objectionable if one always realized what sort of fault is here meant, namely, simply the origin of suffering. But if one means by a tragic fault a morally reprehensible action, for which the perpetrator justly suffers, and for which he must atone by his sorrows, he displaces the proper standpoint to such a degree that it is impossible for him to realize, in the great tragic writers, the simple workings of facts upon each other. . . . The weight of the tragic fault does not necessarily depend upon the magnitude of the moral transgression connected with it. Whether the acts from which the tragic misfortunes spring are in themselves good or bad in a moral sense is not the essential point, though the work of the tragic poet will doubtless assume very different forms in the two cases. The essential thing primarily is that these acts should evoke a violent conflict between the hero and a power whose significance we must acknowledge, and that we should feel that this conflict is inevitable. That it is the power of the State with which Antigone enters into conflict impresses upon her fate the stamp of necessity, and consequently of tragedy, in a heightened degree, but her tragic error does not by any means constitute on that account a moral fault." "The effect of the tragedy is greatest," he adds, "in those cases in which the error which finally causes the hero's ruin is linked with his inmost nature, his noblest qualities."

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This, then, is ten Brink's interpretation of *Macbeth*, that it is a tragedy of Fate, that Macbeth is the victim of an overmastering passion which seizes upon him and bears him away in its irresistible sweep.

"Shakspere often," he says, "and oftenest in his most powerful tragedies, shows us the tragic passion which springs of necessity from the hero's nature to be in direct opposition to that nature. Othello's jealousy, his unfounded suspicion, cannot be explained simply on the ground of a certain spiritual narrowness; but, essentially, on the ground of his being of an open, high-minded, confiding nature. Not knowing what it is to dissimulate, he does not believe in Iago's dissimulation. And it is because the passion aroused within him is contrary to his nature that it exerts so fearful and destructive an influence upon him.

"We observe the same thing in *Macbeth*. In this play Shakspere propounded to himself one of the most difficult problems that any tragic poet has ever had to deal with. Until then his tragic heroes had been such that they could say of themselves, as Lear does later,

'I am a man more sinn'd against than sinning.'

But of Macbeth, the regicide, the usurper, the bloody tyrant, this cannot be said. How could Shakspere dare to make a figure like Macbeth the hero of a tragedy? How did he succeed in arousing for this hero the deepest sympathies of the beholder? Admirable is the lofty way in which he, disdaining all outward help, all petty artifices, leads the problem back to its simplest, most difficult, profoundest form. He suppresses every feature furnished by his source which could palliate or excuse Macbeth's deed, that fatal deed, the murder of Duncan, from which all the others flow. And this he does not merely tacitly by his manner of presenting the

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personages of the action and their relation to each other. No, he tells us explicitly that Duncan is the gentlest, the most just of princes, who has heaped honors upon Macbeth, and, in token of his favor, visits him in his castle and there sleeps confidingly under his roof. He tells us expressly that everything seems to deter Macbeth from his deed, that nothing impels him to it but his ambition alone. And he tells this by the mouth of Macbeth himself; it is Macbeth who is his own accuser. He presents the tragic problem to us in all its fearful clearness; and this it is that at once gives us the solution. For in the fact that Macbeth accuses himself before he does the deed; that he does nothing to palliate the crime in his own eyes; that he is filled with agony and dread as he clutches his dagger and makes his way to Duncan's chamber—we see that he is not a cold-blooded murderer, but the victim of an overpowering passion, which takes complete possession of his vivid imagination, summons up before him dismal pictures more fearful than reality, holds him under a spell, from which he seeks to free himself by his deed. And this passion, ambition, springing from the justifiable self-esteem of this heroic nature,—yea, this truly royal nature, had Macbeth only been born in the purple,—fanned by the prophecy of the witches, nourished by the influence of his wife, develops itself in a way directly opposed to his heroic nature and destructive of its very essence."

Shakspere, he says in substance, referring to tragic victims in general, far from painting his offending hero in the blackest colors possible, from representing him as repellent to the highest degree,—endeavoring, on the contrary, to bring him humanly near to us, to make his deed comprehensible,—transforms his crime, so far as possible, into innocence; or, as Schiller expresses it,

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"Er wälzt die gröss're Hälfte seiner Schuld
Den unglückseligen Gestirnen zu."
(He casts the greater half of his great guilt
Upon the unfav'ring and malignant stars).

Moulton, too, notwithstanding the emphasis which he elsewhere lays upon Macbeth's freedom of will, speaks of Macbeth's "impulse of uncontrollable passion . . . so uncontrollable, indeed, that it appears to Lady Macbeth stronger than the strongest of feminine passions, a mother's love."

To the reader who is constrained to hold with Barrett Wendell * the following view of the significance of the play there is assuredly no dearth of 'distinctively tragic effects,' "Macbeth himself is a wonderful study of fate-ridden, irresponsible, yet damning crime. Meaningless in one aspect such a figure seems; yet its appalling, unmeaning mystery is everlastingly true. This view of human nature is again † like that formulated by Calvinism. Forced to sin by an incarnate power beyond himself, man, eternally unregenerate, is nevertheless held to account for every act of a will perverted by the sin and

* *William Shakspere*, Barrett Wendell, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1894.

† "This mood has much in common with a potent contemporary mood . . . the Calvinistic philosophy of the Puritans. As with them, life is a positively evil thing, made up of sin, of weakness, of whatever else should deserve damnation. Fate is overpowering; pure ideals are bent and broken in conflict with fact . . . most men are bound by the very law of their being to whirl headlong toward merited damnation . . . .

"Finally, in *Macbeth*, the mood which we have called Calvinistic expresses, with unprecedented abandonment to artistic passion, an ultimately ironical view of human life. At least to human beings, life is an unrelieved misery—a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. Taken for all in all, *Macbeth* reveals deeper knowledge of spiritual misery than we have fathomed before."—*B. Wendell.*

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the curse of ancestral humanity. He is the sport of external powers; and so far as these powers deal with him, they are all evil, malicious, wreaking ill without end. Life, then, is a horrible mystery; it is a 'fitful fever,' after which perhaps the chosen few may sleep well; it is 'a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.' Consciousness, indeed, is a delirium, a raving imbecility; yet when the end comes he who first cries 'Hold, enough!' is damned for the deeds of his delirious raving. The hackneyed rhyme of Macbeth's last speech makes us forget, for an instant, the full horror of its triumphantly Calvinistic meaning. As we ponder, the horror grows; there are moods in which we cry out a protest."

Fletcher speaks feelingly of 'the inherent evil' in the nature of 'this most odious personage' and of the richly merited destruction that falls upon him 'amidst universal execration'; but ten Brink,—not ignoring the moral effect of art, the more effective, perhaps, because indirect; asserting, indeed, that "the tragic critic often feels it his vocation to formulate judgments of moral condemnation,"—ten Brink, referring to the tragedies of Shakspere in which our sympathies are enlisted for a guilty hero, asks, "Is there a loftier human standpoint than one that comprehends all and forgives all? Is it not more divine deeply to pity Othello or Macbeth for his deeds than to condemn him?"

The nature and intensity of the reader's sympathy are, obviously, determined by his conception of the significance of the play, by his view of the 'primal cause' of the tragic victim's impulse to evil, and by his attitude toward the tragic hero's tragic fault.

Referring to the fascination exercised by Shakspere upon "the reader whose natural bent of mind leads him to delight in searching out the human spirit concealed

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and revealed in a great artist's work," Brandes has said that the words that should rise to the lips of such a reader of Shakspere are, "I will not let you go until you have confessed to me the secret of your being." The reader of the tragedy of *Macbeth* may well apply these words to this play, mindful of the Aristotelian doctrine that 'the distinctive mark' of tragedy is its power to arouse the purgative emotions of pity and fear.

The Weird Sisters.

To appreciate the effect upon an Elizabethan audience of the incantations and the predictions of the Weird Sisters, the reader should recall the attitude of the age toward the spirit-world.

When the play of *Macbeth* was written, belief in the existence and in the diabolical power of witches was well-nigh universal. Eighty years before Shakspere was born Pope Innocent VIII. issued his famous Bull against the exercise of witchcraft, 'Summis desiderantes affectibus.' During the time covered by Shakspere's life unnumbered thousands of men and women and children were done to death in Christian Europe on the ground of their complicity with the Prince of the Power of the Air. From the middle of the sixteenth century to the middle of the seventeenth, one hundred thousand accused suffered death, it is alleged, in Germany alone. This warfare was waged by the adherents of many faiths in many lands, over a wide extent of territory and during many generations of men. More than one hundred and fifty years after *Macbeth* was put upon the stage John Wesley declared that to give up witchcraft is to give up the Bible; and the third edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, issued in 1797, expressed a still prevailing view in the sentence, "The reality of demoniacal pos-

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session stands upon the same evidence with the gospel system in general."

The play of *Macbeth* was produced during the height of this crusade against these accomplices of the Prince of Darkness. Many of the first spectators probably had themselves seen witches tortured and burnt at the stake, or at least had heard vivid accounts from eyewitnesses of some of the thousands of executions taking place in Europe yearly. Some of these spectators had perhaps been present at the trial instituted by James VI. of Scotland, later King of England, to discover the cause of the tempests which in 1589 had distressed his homeward passage with his bride, Princess Anne of Denmark, the mystery of which was solved by the judicious application of torture. "A Dr. Fian, while his legs were crushed in the 'boots,' and wedges were driven under his finger nails, confessed that several hundred witches had gone to sea in a sieve from the port of Leith, and had raised storms and tempests to drive back the Princess" (Andrew D. White). According to Brandes, James "was present in person at the trial by torture of 200 witches * who were burnt" for producing this storm. The royal instigator of this trial and this torture published in 1597 a work on

* Dr. Brandes has abundant authority, one must assume, for the statement quoted above as to the number of witches burnt for producing this untimely storm, though a smaller number is given by some authorities. But however this may be, there is no uncertainty as to the agent of the witches on this ill-starred occasion, which was beyond doubt a certain 'christened cat.' "Againe it is confessed, that the said christened cat was the cause of the Kinges Majesties shippe, at his coming forthe of Denmarke, had a contrarie winde to the rest of the shippes then beeing in his companie, which thing was most straunge and true, as the Kinges Majestie acknowledgeth, for when the rest of the shippes had a faire and good winde, then was the winde contrarie and altogether against his Majestie."—*Newes from Scotland.*

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Dæmonologie, and in 1598 caused "no fewer than 600 old women to be burnt" (Brandes). In 1603 he ascended the throne of England as James I. Though for many years the practice of witchcraft had been a felony punishable by death 'without benefit of clergy,' yet at the accession of James new laws were enacted and in the years succeeding many hundreds suffered a cruel death.

According to Roskoff, *Geschichte des Teufels* (History of the Devil), 'millions' suffered death in Christendom during the period of belief in the existence and power of witches.

The explanation of this extreme severity toward witches in all European countries is, as a matter of course, the well-nigh universal conviction of the age, that witches, having sold themselves to the devil, were possessed of the devil's power, that their diabolical "I'll do, I'll do, and I'll do" was a source of storms, whirlwinds, and floods, of pestilence, insanity, disease, and death.*

Whatever view, then, the modern reader may entertain in regard to the existence and the power of witches, to the audience which first heard (1605–6) the ominous words, 'Fair is foul and foul is fair,' 'All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter!' the Weird Sisters were far more than a weird stage spectacle or than the outward embodiment of an inward temptation. The reader will, as a matter of course, catch more truly the effect intended, if he views the witch scenes through the eyes of the spectators for whom the play was written.

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* For an introduction to the literature of the subject, see *The Literature of Witchcraft*, by George L. Burr, Professor of History in Cornell University, in the papers of the American Historical Association, July, 1890; *Geschichte des Teufels*, by Gustav Roskoff, Professor of Theology in the University of Vienna, Leipsic, 1869; or the chapter on Magic and Witchcraft in Lecky's *History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe.*

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From Dowden's *Shakspere—His Mind and Art.*

[*Macbeth*] is the tragedy of the twilight and the setting-in of thick darkness upon a human soul. We assist at the spectacle of a terrible sunset in folded clouds of blood. . . . And as at sunset strange winds arise and gather the clouds to westward with mysterious pause and stir, so the play of *Macbeth* opens with movement of mysterious, spiritual powers, which are auxiliary of that awful shadow which first creeps and then strides across the moral horizon.

It need hardly be once more repeated that the Witches of *Macbeth* are not the broom-stick witches of vulgar tradition. If they are grotesque, they are also sublime. The weird sisters of our dramatist may take their place beside the terrible old women of Michael Angelo, who spin the destinies of man. Shakspere is no more afraid than Michael Angelo of being vulgar. It is the feeble, sentimental-ideal artist who is nervous about the dignity of his conceptions, and who, in aiming at the great, attains only the grandiose; he thins away all that is positive and material, in the hope of discovering some novelty of shadowy horror. But the great ideal artists—Michael Angelo, Dante, Blake, Beethoven—see things far more dreadful than the vague horrors of the romanticist; they are perfectly fearless in their use of the material, the definite, the gross, the so-called vulgar. And thus Shakspere fearlessly showed us his weird sisters, 'the Goddesses of destinie,' brewing infernal charms in their wicked caldron. We cannot quite dispense in this life with ritualism, and the ritualism of evil is foul and ugly; the hell-broth which the Witches are cooking bubbles up with no refined, spiritual poison; the quintessence of mischief is being brewed out of foul things which can be enumerated; thick and slab the gruel must be made. Yet these weird sisters

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remain terrible and sublime. They tingle in every fibre with evil energy, as the tempest does with the electric current; their malignity is inexhaustible; they are wells of sin springing up into everlasting death; they have their raptures and ecstasies in crime; they snatch with delight at the relics of impiety and foul disease; they are the awful inspirers of murder, insanity, suicide.

The weird sisters, says Gervinus, "are simply the embodiment of inward temptation." They are surely much more than this. If we must regard the entire universe as a manifestation of an unknown somewhat which lies behind it, we are compelled to admit that there is an apocalypse of power auxiliary to vice, as really as there is a manifestation of virtuous energy. All venerable mythologies admit this fact. The Mephistopheles of Goethe remains as the testimony of our scientific nineteenth century upon the matter. The history of the race, and the social medium in which we live and breathe, have created forces of good and evil which are independent of the will of each individual man and woman. The sins of past centuries taint the atmosphere of to-day. We move through the world subject to accumulated forces of evil and of good outside ourselves. We are caught up at times upon a stream of virtuous force, a beneficent current which bears us onward toward an abiding place of joy, of purity, and of sacrifice; or a counter-current drifts us toward darkness and cold and death. And therefore no great realist in art has hesitated to admit the existence of what theologians name divine grace, and of what theologians name Satanic temptation. There is, in truth, no such thing as 'naked manhood.' The attempt to divorce ourselves from the large impersonal life of the world, and to erect ourselves into independent wills, is the dream of the idealist. And between the evil within and the evil without sub-

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sists a terrible sympathy and reciprocity. There is in the atmosphere a zymotic poison of sin; and the constitution which is morally enfeebled supplies appropriate nutriment for the germs of disease; while the hardy moral nature repels the same germs. Macbeth is infected; Banquo passes free. Let us, then, not inquire after the names of these fatal sisters. Nameless they are, and sexless. It is enough to know that such powers auxiliary to vice do exist outside ourselves, and that Shakspere was scientifically accurate in his statement of the fact. . . .

However we may account for it, the fact is unquestionable that some of the richest creative natures of the world have all their lives been believers, if not with their intellect, at least with their instinctive feelings and their imagination, in much of the old-wives' lore of the nursery. Scott does not as a sceptic make use in his novels of ghostly and supernatural machinery merely for the sake of producing certain artistic effects. He retained at least a half-faith in the Gothic mythology of the North. Goethe for a time devoted himself to the pursuit of alchemy. In "The Spanish Gypsy" of George Eliot, from the necklace of Zarca dim mastering powers, blind yet strong, pass into his daughter's will; and in that poem the science of modern psychology accepts certain of the facts of old superstition—accepts them and explains them. We slighter and smaller natures can deprive ourselves altogether of the sense of such phenomena; we can elevate ourselves into a rare atmosphere of intellectuality and incredulity. The wider and richer natures of creative artists have received too large an inheritance from the race, and have too fully absorbed all the influences of their environment for this to be possible in their case. While dim recollections and forefeelings haunt their blood, they cannot enclose

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themselves in a little pinfold of demonstrable knowledge and call it the universe.

From Brandes' *William Shakespeare.*

It must not be forgotten that this whole spirit- and witch-world meant something quite different to Shakespeare's contemporaries from what it means to us. We cannot even be absolutely certain that Shakespeare himself did not believe in the possible existence of such beings. Great poets have seldom been consistent in their incredulity. . . . But Shakespeare's own attitude of mind matters less than that of the public for whom he wrote.

From Ulrici's *Shakspeare's Dramatic Art.*

The tragedy opens in an extraordinary manner by the appearance of the three witches, who flit across the scene and vanish after giving an obscure intimation of their designs upon Macbeth. . . . If lofty energy of will and action be the field upon which the power of the tragic pathos is here manifested, then just this very opening and the introduction of the witches serve, at the beginning, to throw the clearest light on the tragic foundation upon which the drama is to be constructed. The will of man is not *absolutely* free *self*-determination, with the full and clear consciousness of its motives; it is rather only *conditionally* or *relatively* free. . . .

This knowledge, or if it be preferred, this feeling of the connection between the human will and the outer world became Shakspeare's, if not conscious, yet unconscious and instinctive motive for retaining in his tragedy the figures of the witches offered by the old legend. . . .

Accordingly, they are, in fact, the personified echo of evil, which responds, from nature and the general condition of the outer world, to the evil in the breast of man; they call it forth and help it to come to a deter-

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mination and action, and urge it forward on the road to evil. But, it may be asked, why does the poet just in this tragedy give these powers (which more or less assert themselves everywhere) such an independent, significant form, and cause them so visibly to take part in the action? Not merely to be the motives of the deep fall of so great and noble a mind as Macbeth's, but, at the same time, to *lessen* his *guilt*, and thus to retain our sympathy and the tragic pity which might otherwise easily be turned into horror and disgust (by deeds such as are here exhibited) and consequently destroy the tragic impression.

From Moulton's *Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist.*

Besides Destiny the Shakespearean Drama admits direct supernatural agencies—witches, ghosts, apparitions, as well as portents and violations of natural law. It appears to me idle to contend that these in Shakespeare are not really supernatural, but must be interpreted as delusions of their victims . . . for the assumption of such supernatural existences the responsibility lies not with Shakespeare, but with the opinion of the age he is pourtraying. A more important question is how far Shakespeare uses such supernatural agency as a motive force in his plays; how far does he allow it to enter into the working of events, for the interpretation of which he is responsible? On this point Shakespeare's usage is clear and subtle: he uses the agency of the supernatural to intensify and to illuminate human action, not to determine it.

Supernatural agency intensifying human action is illustrated in *Macbeth*. No one can seriously doubt the objective existence of the Witches in this play, or that they are endowed with superhuman sources of knowledge. But the question is, do they in reality turn Mac-

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beth to crime? In one of the chapters devoted to this play I have dwelt on the importance of the point that Macbeth has been already meditating treason in his heart when he meets the Witches on the heath. His secret thoughts—which he betrays in his guilty start—have been an invitation to the powers of evil, and they have obeyed the summons: Macbeth has already ventured a descent, and they add an impulse downward. . . .

The function of the Witches throughout the action of this play is exactly expressed by a phrase Banquo uses in connection with them: they are only 'instruments of darkness,' assisting to carry forward courses of conduct initiated independently of them. Macbeth has made the destiny which the Witches reveal.

From Chambers' *Macbeth* (The Arden Shakespeare).

. . . just here, we come upon one of those ultimate mysteries, which meet us everywhere when we scratch the surface of things . . . the supernatural character of the weird sisters denotes the mystery involved in temptation; the mystery, that is, of the existence of evil. . . . In *Macbeth* the central idea or theme appears to me to be this. A noble character, noble alike in potentiality and fruition, may yet be completely overmastered by mysterious, inexplicable temptation; and if he be once subdued a curse not to be forgone is for ever upon him. Temptation begets sin, and sin yet further sin, and this again punishment sure and inexorable. The illustration of this central idea is to be found in the rise and fall of Lord and Lady Macbeth. To them temptation comes in the guise of ambition, the subtlest form in which it can approach high souls.

"Shakespeare's witches originate deeds of blood, and begin bad impulses to men. From the moment that

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their eyes first meet with Macbeth's, he is spell-bound. That meeting sways his destiny. He can never break the fascination."—*Charles Lamb.*

"The overwhelming pressure of preternatural agency urges on the tide of human passion with redoubled force. Macbeth himself appears driven along by the violence of his fate like a vessel drifting before a storm."—*William Hazlitt.*

"Shakespeare never presents a character to us as *a victim of fate* at the outset."—*Hiram Corson.*

"The tendency of his [Shakspere's] youth had been to see good everywhere. He had even felt, with his King Henry, that 'there is some soul of goodness in things evil.' Now, when the misery of life, the problem of evil, presented itself to his inward eye, it was especially the potency of wickedness that impressed him as strange and terrible."—*Brandes.*

Heine speaks of Shakspere's transformation of the "soothsaying women" of the old northern legend, those "Valkyrias," the real arbiters of human destiny. "The heathen Fates of the ancients, endowed with praiseworthy and magical beneficence, have therefore been christianised by Shakespeare. The destruction of his hero is not the result of fore-ordained necessity, something unalterably fixed, like the ancient idea of destiny, but is traceable to the allurements of hell, which in unseen ways enmesh human hearts. Macbeth is conquered by the power of the devil, the root of all evil."

From Snider's *The Shakespearian Drama.*

A question is likely to arise here in the mind of the reader—why are such beings endowed with the gift of prophecy? The complete insight into their nature reveals its necessity. They represent the totality of

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conditions, internal and external, which determine conduct to evil; impart to that totality a voice, and you have the prophetic Weird Sister. Given all the circumstances, the occurrence must take place; if, then, all these circumstances can find utterance, that utterance must be an announcement of the event which is to happen. The powers which control and impel the individual are united together and endowed with speech and personality in the case of the Weird Sister. When she gives expression to her own essence, it is a prophecy. Hence the poet has introduced these existences to foretell; we may call this their ultimate principle. It must be remembered, at the same time, that the gift of prophecy is a natural quite as much as an intellectual endowment; the prophet feels in the surrounding circumstances that which is to come; it is not so much a clear, conscious knowledge, as a dark presentiment. Undoubtedly, the present has within it the seeds of the future; let the totality of influences work upon a keenly receptive spirit, gifted with a strong imagination, and we have the Seer. He is not the Thinker who can deduce the future as the logical result of the present, but he is one who feels the whole, and sees in rapt vision its consequences, and expresses them in dark, often high-wrought, symbolical language.

MACBETH.

"The two all-important things to be considered in the Tragedy of Macbeth," Corson* has written, "are: 1, the relations of the Witches to Macbeth, and 2, the relations of Lady Macbeth to Macbeth in his career of ambition." Professor Corson thus indicates clearly the

* *An Introduction to Shakespeare*, Hiram Corson, D. C. Heath and Co.

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direction which all discussion of the tragedy of *Macbeth* must take, or at least all discussion respecting the characters of Macbeth and of Lady Macbeth and respecting the significance of the play as a whole. Any adequate discussion of the character of Macbeth must, as is evident, be based upon some view of the significance of the Weird Sisters and of the extent of their power. Moulton and Barrett Wendell, for example, cannot possibly entertain similar views respecting the character of Macbeth, for Moulton affirms that Macbeth "made the destiny which the Witches reveal," that Shakspere "uses the agency of the supernatural to intensify and to illuminate human action, not to determine it"; while to Barrett Wendell the play is "a wonderful study of fate-ridden, irresponsible, yet damning crime," in which the hero, "the sport of external powers," is "forced to sin by an incarnate power beyond himself," and life is "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."

The opinions of various critics are quoted briefly in the preceding pages. There is herewith given further comment on the relations of the Weird Sisters to Macbeth, and on the characters of Macbeth and of Lady Macbeth and their relations to each other.

From John W. Hales' *Folia Litteraria* (Macmillan and Co.).

. . . . Shakespeare and Milton are in these great works [*Macbeth* and *Paradise Lost*], each in his own way, thinking of the same transcendent problem, viz., the freedom of man's will. As to Adam, and as to Macbeth, the old, old questions arise: Were they capable of resisting the terrible forces that were arrayed against them? Could they have delivered themselves from evil? How did they come to fall so miserably? Whence was engendered the weakness that undid them? How far were they responsible for such a disastrous debility? What is

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the real parentage of crime? Even such awful and insoluble problems are at once suggested by the careers of Adam and Macbeth. For in neither case do external causes explain the horrible mischief that is depicted. . . .

But the manner in which Shakespeare deals with these dark, inscrutable problems is very different from that in which Milton deals with them; . . . Briefly, Shakespeare deals with these problems as one who feels their infinite mystery, and that they are 'beyond the reaches of our souls' . . . .

He [Shakspere] had a profound sense of the pathos of things. 'But yet the pity of it . . . the pity of it.' He certainly does not spare the sinner. He certainly makes us hate his sin; but in him 'the quality of mercy is not strained.' As we watch Macbeth drifting towards the precipice, it is not contempt for his weakness that he excites overpoweringly within us; it is rather a profound compassion; it is not a sense of superiority and pride that we stand firm, but a sense of humility—a sense that we are of like passions with him, and might too easily be drifting in a like direction. Pity and terror purify our souls. We feel ourselves face to face with

> those mysteries which Heaven
> Will not have earth to know.

We are conscious of the amazing shallowness of those who 'take upon' them 'the mystery of things, as if' they 'were God's spies.' We perceive with a new vividness that

> There are more things in heaven and earth
> Than are dreamt of in your philosophy;

and that the truest reverence, and it may be that the most exemplary 'faith,' are exhibited in the submissive acceptance of the limitedness of human discovery and knowledge.

In striking contrast is Milton's attitude . . . .

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From a discussion by C. Coquelin in *The Century Magazine*, October, 1889.

Shakspere's personages are the *changing* and *differing* men, frequently made or unmade by the torrent of blood and of life. Those of Molière are man built all of a piece, born what he is, and dying as he was born . . . .

Shakspere likes to take an irreproachable man; he shows him coming straight from nature's hands, full of the milk of human kindness and seeking nobly all that he most ardently craves. But there is in him a germ, sometimes imperceptible; this germ, circumstances, chance, the perfidy of an *Iago*, the meeting of the three old women on the heath, a dream, even less,—a doubt,—may cause suddenly to ferment; it rises up, swells, and becomes a devouring and irresistible passion; the end is fatal, it is crime, despair, death. Nothing can help it; the will of the man is the sport of chance and the heat of his blood. Even in the last works—in which the ending is happy—the man has had nothing to do with it; it is again chance which this time ends everything well; . . .

Thus Molière's personages *are;* Shakspere's *become* . . . . But we must not exaggerate; one finds likewise in Shakspere innate characters. *Iago*, *Lady Macbeth*, are certainly born what they are. . . .

To make us shudder or weep it [the drama] must show us in its personages, if not the man that we are, at least the man that we flatter ourselves to be—good, valiant, and wise. Then we are interested in what happens to these men who are like us. It seems as though we were following our own possible history. And this is why *Othello* or *Macbeth* are at first neither ambitious nor jealous; they only become so after we have contracted a fellow feeling for them.

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"The character of *Macbeth* is the antithesis of that of *Hamlet*. . . . If the play of 'Hamlet' expresses the force of thought over action, that of 'Macbeth' may be considered as illustrating the prominence of action over thought."—*Tommaso Salvini.*

From *The Century Magazine*, November, 1881.

Salvini depicts *Macbeth* from beginning to end as absolutely devoid of conscience and incapable of remorse, with a consistency of blind selfishness and brutal force which leaves no trait or deed unexplained. No tool is he of a stronger and more fiendishly cruel nature,—he is the mate, not the creature of *Lady Macbeth.*

From Winter's *Life and Art of Edwin Booth* (Macmillan and Co., 1894).

Charlotte Cushman said of Macbeth that he is the great ancestor of all the Bowery ruffians. That ancient view of the character has had many exponents, . . . but practically it is now discredited and cast aside. Kemble rejected it; so did Macready; so did Henry Irving; and so, in the mature period of his career, did Edwin Booth. No thinker, perhaps, ought to marvel that it has extensively prevailed; for the intricacy of Macbeth is precisely of a kind that was likely to cause its acceptance. . . . In the presence of Macbeth we confront a man whose views are noble, whose language is by turns tender, piteous, poetic, and sublime, but whose deeds are infernal, and whose life suddenly supplements a career of spotless personal purity and admirable heroism with a culmination of frantic depravity and hideous wickedness. . . . The obvious view of such a man would apprehend him as a ruffian developed from a hypocrite; and as such, in fact, he has commonly been presented on the stage. But this could not have been the intention of Shakespeare, because this doctrine makes Macbeth merely a butcher in

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the shambles, . . . Every spectator is thrilled by Macbeth and is sorry for him. The crimes that he commits are premeditated, and yet when done they are done against his will. . . .

If Macbeth be judged by his actions, and it be conceded that those actions are done of his own volition, he is a monster. If he be judged by his words he is one of the most imaginative and eloquent of poets. If he be judged by his feelings, he is one of the greatest of human sufferers. The plan of Shakespeare, apparently, was to depict a great and noble nature containing the germs of evil, and to show it in agony and ruin under the victorious influence of an infernal malignity. Macbeth, viewed as a man who wades by choice through a sea of blood, may present a terrible spectacle, but he is far less sublime and pathetic, and therefore far less a magnificent creation, than Macbeth as a man of grand attributes, and even of tenderness, helpless in the hands of a cruel and horrible destiny. . . .

Macbeth and his wife are great creatures conquered by fiends. . . . Shakespeare has painted their surrender, and their awful sufferings in consequence of it. . . . Shakespeare certainly must have had something more important in view in writing *Macbeth* than the little scrap of morality which teaches that we must not yield to our evil propensities. He was not a dealer in either platitudes or abstractions. The man and the woman in *Macbeth* are invested with some of the greatest attributes of human nature; and the interest, the weight, the substance, the importance, the meaning of the piece is made dependable upon the display of the ruin of those attributes by the powers of evil. It is a sublime, pathetic, afflicting picture of Fate, and there is no precept connected with it, and no moral to be deduced from it,—any more than there is from a cyclone or an earthquake.

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Booth's embodiment of Macbeth underwent various changes, all for the better, as he advanced in experience. At first he gave great prominence and emphasis to the martial aspect of the part. . . . Later he gave great prominence to the torn, distracted, convulsed, tempest-haunted state of the helpless human being. . . . His utterance of the contention of good and evil in Macbeth's soul was intensely real and profoundly eloquent—so that it revealed a sufferer and not simply a miscreant, and thus it came home to the heart with a sense of actual and corrosive agony.

The high view of the character was the view that Booth finally presented. . . .

From Victor Hugo's *William Shakespeare* (translated by M. B. Anderson. A. C. McClurg and Co.)

To say 'Macbeth is ambition' is to say nothing. Macbeth is hunger. What hunger? The hunger of the monster, always possible in man. Certain souls have teeth. Do not arouse their hunger.

To bite at the apple is a fearful thing. . . . Once Macbeth has taken the first bite he is lost. . . .

Covetousness easily becoming violence, violence easily becoming crime, crime easily becoming madness: this progression is in Macbeth. Covetousness, Crime, Madness—these three night-hags have spoken to him in the solitude, and have invited him to the throne. . . . The first step taken, the ground begins to crumble; it is the avalanche, . . . He is a stone of ruin, a flame of war, a beast of prey, a scourge. . . . Nature loses patience, Nature enters into action against Macbeth, Nature becomes soul against the man who has become brute force.

"The manner in which the character of Macbeth is sustained upon the stage does not, in many cases, preserve a perfect fidelity to the part. . . . The actor's inter-

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pretation for the most part ignores any holding back from the 'supernatural solicitings,' and represents instead a will full-bent upon the deed. We lose, consequently, the fine charm of the virtuous reluctance that for a while stays his steps as he approaches the steep of crime."—*James E. Murdoch* (*The Forum*, September, 1890).

Rümelin (in *Shakespearestudien*) says that Macbeth, after the murder, ought to show traces of his better nature, some moments of struggle.

From Story's *Excursions in Art and Letters.*

The spring of his nature is ambition, and in working out his ends he is cruel, pitiless, and bloody. He is without a single good trait of character, and from the beginning to the end of the play, at every step, he develops deeper abysses of cruelty and inhumanity in his nature.

From Bucknill's *The Mad Folk of Shakespeare.*

Macbeth is no villain in-grain, like Richard the Third or Iago, revelling in the devil's work because he likes it; but a once noble human nature, struggling but yielding in a net of temptation, whose meshes are wound around him by the visible hand of the Spirit of Evil. Slave as he is to that soldier's passion, the love of fame and power, he is not without amiable qualities. He was once loved by his arch-enemy Macduff, to whom Malcolm says:

> 'This tyrant, whose sole name blisters our tongues,
> Was once thought honest; you have loved him well.'

. . . to the mental physiologist, to whom nerve rather than conscience, the functions of the brain rather than the power of the will, is an object of study, it is impossible to omit from calculation the influences of the supernatural event, which is not only the starting-point of the action, but the remote cause of the mental phenomena. . . .

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In the attempt to trace conduct to its earliest source or motive, and to deduce the laws of emotional progression, . . . the physiological moralist teaches the importance of establishing an early habit of emotional action, which may tend to virtuous conduct, and form a prepared defence against temptation. By showing how invariably in the moral world evil leads on to evil, he teaches in the best manner the wisdom of opposing the beginnings of evil, . . .

Macbeth, however, saved himself from actual insanity by rushing from the maddening horrors of meditation into a course of decisive resolute action.

Lady Macbeth.

"What was Lady Macbeth's form and temperament? In Maclise's great painting of the banquet scene, she is represented as a woman of large and coarse development; a Scandinavian amazon, the muscles of whose brawny arms could only have been developed to their great size by hard and frequent use; a woman of whose fists her husband might well be afraid. . . . But was Lady Macbeth such a being? Did the fierce fire of her soul animate the epicene bulk of a virago? Never! Lady Macbeth was a lady beautiful and delicate, whose one vivid passion proves that her organization was instinct with nerve-force, unoppressed by weight of flesh. Probably she was small; for it is the smaller sort of women whose emotional fire is the most fierce, and she herself bears unconscious testimony to the fact that her hand was little. . . . Although she manifests no feeling towards Macbeth beyond the regard which ambition makes her yield, it is clear that he entertains for her the personal love which a beautiful woman would excite. . . . Moreover, the effect of remorse upon her own health proves the preponderance of nerve in her organization. Could

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the Lady Macbeth of Mr. Maclise, and of others who have painted this lady, have been capable of the fire and force of her character in the commission of her crimes, the remembrance of them would scarcely have disturbed the quiet of her after years. We figure Lady Macbeth to have been a tawny or brown blonde Rachel, with more beauty, with grey and cruel eyes, but with the same slight dry configuration and constitution, instinct with determined nerve-power."—*J. M. Bucknill, M. D.*

Goethe (in *Englisches Schauspiel in Paris*), disapproving of Tieck's portrayal of Lady Macbeth as a loving wife, characterizes her as a kind of female fury rather.

"The resemblance between the Clytemnestra . . . of Æschylus and the Lady Macbeth of Shakespeare was too remarkable to have escaped notice."—*James Russell Lowell.*

From Story's *Excursions in Art and Letters.*

The Lady Macbeth of Mrs. Siddons is the only Lady Macbeth we know and believe in. She is the imperious, wicked, cruel wife of Macbeth, urging on her weak and kind-hearted husband to abominable crimes solely to gratify her own ambitious and evil nature. She is without heart, tenderness, or remorse. Devilish in character, violent in purpose, she is the soul of the whole play; the plotter and instigator of all its horrors; a fiend-like creature, who, having a complete mastery over Macbeth, works him to madness by her taunts, and relentlessly drives him on against his will to the commission of his terrible crimes. We hate her, as we pity Macbeth. He is weak of purpose, amiable of disposition, 'full of the milk of human kindness,' an unwilling instrument of all her evil designs, who, wanting force of will and strength of character, yields reluctantly to her infernal temptations.

Nothing could more clearly prove the great genius of

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Mrs. Siddons, than that she has been able so to stamp upon the public mind this amazing misconception, . . .

From a report of a lecture at Bristol, reprinted in *Lectures and Notes on Shakspere*, by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Bohn, 1884.

The lecturer [Coleridge] alluded to the prejudiced idea of Lady Macbeth as a monster; as a being out of nature and without conscience: . . . But her conscience, so far from being seared, was continually smarting within her; and she endeavours to stifle its voice, and keep down its struggles, by inflated and soaring fancies, and appeals to spiritual agency. . . .

A passage where she alludes to 'plucking her nipple from the boneless gums of her infant,' though usually thought to prove a merciless and unwomanly nature, proves the direct opposite: she brings it as the most solemn enforcement to Macbeth of the solemnity of his promise to undertake the plot against Duncan. Had *she* so sworn, she would have done that which was most horrible to her feelings, rather than break the oath; and as the most horrible act which it was possible for imagination to conceive, as that which was the most revolting to her own feelings, she alludes to the destruction of her infant, while in the act of sucking at her breast. Had she regarded this with savage indifference, there would have been no force in the appeal; but her very allusion to it, and her purpose in this allusion, shows that she considered no tie so tender as that which connected her with her babe.

From a letter by William Carleton (author of *Tales of the Irish Peasantry*), dated November 27, 1846, published in an appendix to *Some of Shakespeare's Female Characters*, by Helena Faucit, Lady Martin.

. . . I began to feel as if I had never seen Lady Macbeth's true character before. I said to myself: this

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woman, it seems to me, is simply urging her husband forward through love for him, which prompts her to wish for the gratification of his ambition, to commit a murder. This, it would appear, is her sole object, and in working it out, she is naturally pursuing a terrible course, and one of singular difficulty. She perceives that he has scruples; and it is necessary that she should work upon him so far as that he should commit the crime, but at the same time prevent him from feeling revolted at the contemplation of it; and this she effects by a sanguinary sophistry that altogether hardens his heart. But this closes her lessons of cruelty to him. In such a case it is not necessary that she should label herself as a murderess, and wantonly parade that inhuman ferocity by which she has hitherto been distinguished. Her office of temptress ceases with the murder, and the gratification of what she had considered her husband's ambition. This, as I felt it, is the distinction which Miss Faucit draws, . . . It unquestionably adds new elements to the character, and not only rescues it from the terrible and revolting monotony in which it has heretofore appeared, but keeps it within the category of humanity, and gives a beautiful and significant moral to the closing scenes of the queen's life.

From *Heine on Shakespeare*, translated by Ida Benecke: A. Constable and Co., Westminster, 1895.

Within the past twelve years [written in 1838] in Germany Lady Macbeth's reputation, which for two hundred years was considered extremely bad, has altered considerably to her advantage. . . . Franz Horn remarked . . . that the poor lady had been greatly misunderstood, that she dearly loved her husband, and was endowed with an affectionate spirit. This view was supported by the learned, erudite, and philosophic Ludwig Tieck, and not long after we beheld Madame Stich, billing and cooing

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sentimentally in the character of Lady Macbeth at the Court Theatre. Many a heart in Berlin was touched by her tones and many a beautiful woman wept at the sight of this good Lady Macbeth. . . .

I do not know whether Germans still defend the aforenamed lady's character. However much has changed since the July revolution, and possibly, even in Berlin, people have come to see that the good Lady Macbeth may be a very beast.

From the *Dublin Review*, July, 1889.

Macbeth, they say, is by nature a dark, scheming, unscrupulously ambitious man, the mainspring of the whole murder-plot; his wife a gentle-natured, essentially *womanly* woman, devoting herself, out of sheer affection for her husband and blind worship of his will, to the furtherance of designs from which she would naturally have shrunk. The theory has only to be stated to repel, and only to be attacked to fall.

"The original choice for evil has for both been made by Macbeth. . . . The only sense in which Lady Macbeth can be pronounced the ruin of her husband is that her firm nature holds him in the path to which he has committed them both, and will not allow his fatal paltering to lose both the virtue he has renounced and the price for which he has bartered it."—*Moulton.*

". . . Lady Macbeth, who is introduced to the spectator already perfected in wickedness, . . . "—*Brandes.*

Salvini, in *The Century Magazine*, November, 1881, expresses his surprise that the sleep-walking scene was not given to Macbeth. "We hear from her no word of remorse or repentance, we see in her no sign of fear or dread of future expiation."

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From Symons' *Studies in Two Literatures*, London, 1897.

Her prayer to the spirits that tend on mortal thoughts shows by no means a mind steeled to compunction. Why should she cry:

Stop up the access and passage to remorse!

if hers were a mind in which no visitings of pity had to be dreaded? . . . She is a woman who can be 'magnificent in sin,' but who has none of the callousness which makes the comfort of the criminal; not one of the poisonous women of the Renaissance, who smiled complacently after an assassination, but a woman of the North, in whom sin is its own 'first revenge.'

From Bucknill's *The Mad Folk of Shakespeare.*

Lady Macbeth's end is psychologically even more instructive than that of her husband. . . . The undaunted metal which would have compelled her to resist to the last, if brought face to face with any resistible adversaries, gradually gives way to the feeling of remorse and deep melancholy when left to feed upon itself. The moral object of the drama required that the fierce gnawing of remorse at the heart of the lady should be made manifest; and, as her firm self-contained nature imposes upon her a reticence in her waking moments in strong contrast to the soliloquising loquacity of her demonstrative husband, the great dramatist has skilfully availed himself of the sleep-talking state in which she uncovers the corroding ulcers of her conscience.

From Dowden's *Shakspere—His Mind and Art.*

Lady Macbeth's delicate frame is filled with high-strung nervous energy. With her to perceive is forthwith to decide, to decide is to act. Having resolved upon her end, a practical logic convinces her that the means are implied and determined. . . .

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Into the service of evil she carries some of the intensity and energy of asceticism—she cuts off from herself her better nature, she yields to no weak paltering with conscience. "I have given suck," she exclaims, "and know how tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me." She is unable to stab Duncan because he resembles her father in his sleep; she is appalled by the copious blood in which the old man lies, and the horror of the sight clings to her memory; the smell of the blood is hateful to her, and almost insupportable; she had not been without apprehension that her feminine nature might fail to carry her through the terrible ordeal, through which she yet resolved that it should be compelled to pass. She must not waste an atom of her strength of will, which has to serve for two murderers—for her husband as well as for herself. She puts into requisition, with the aid of wine and of stimulant words, the reserve of nervous force which lay unused. . . .

The knocking at the gate clashes upon her overstrained nerves and thrills her; but she has determination and energy to direct the actions of Macbeth and rouse him from the mood of abject depression which succeeded his crime. A white flame of resolution glows through her delicate organization, like that through an alabaster lamp:

> Infirm of purpose!
> Give me the daggers: the sleeping and the dead
> Are but as pictures: 'tis the eye of childhood
> That fears a painted devil.

If the hold which she possesses over her own faculties should relax for a moment, all would be lost. For dreadful deeds anticipated and resolved upon she has strength; but the surprise of a novel horror on which she has not counted deprives her suddenly of consciousness. When Macbeth announces his butchery of Duncan's

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grooms the lady swoons—not in feigning, but in fact—and is borne away insensible.

Macbeth wastes himself in vague, imaginative remorse:

> Will not great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
> Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather
> The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
> Making the green one red.

Thus his imagination serves to dissipate the impression of his conscience. What is the worth of this vague, imaginative remorse? Macbeth retained enough of goodness to make him a haggard, miserable criminal; never enough to restrain him from a crime. His hand soon became subdued to what it worked in—the blood in which it paddled and plashed. And yet the loosé incoherent faculties, ever becoming more and more disorganized and disintegrated, somehow held together till the end. "My hands are of your colour," exclaims Lady Macbeth, "but I shame to wear a heart so white. A little water clears us of this deed." Yet it is she, who has uttered no large words about the "multitudinous seas"; who will rise in slumbery agitation, and, with her accustomed action, eagerly essay to remove from her little hand its ineffaceable stain, and, with her delicate sense, sicken at the smell of blood upon it, which "all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten;" and, last, will loosen the terrible constriction of her heart with a sigh that longs to be perpetual. It is the queen, and not her husband, who is slain by conscience.

From *Poet-lore* (*Stage Types of Lady Macbeth*), February, 1893.

Of the acting of Lady Macbeth there are at least three conceptions: one makes her terrible, the other fascinating; the third both fascinating and terrible; and a fourth might be added,—appealing, in which the femi-

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ninity pleads rather than fascinates, entreats and never commands.

From *Adelaide Ristori* (an autobiography), Boston, 1888.

Long and close examination led me to conclude that Lady Macbeth was animated less by affection for her husband than by excessive ambition to share the throne which seemed within his reach.

From *Poet-lore*, vol. iv., 1892.

Is Shakespeare justified in Janauschek's roused tigress, or in Modjeska's broken-souled woman, proving herself unequal to the task of being bad? . . .

Modjeska's Lady Macbeth, gracious, charming, quick-witted, thoroughly intuitional and feminine, . . .

From *The Spectator*, London, January 5, 1889 (referring to Ellen Terry's Lady Macbeth).

. . . the central figure of the magnificently mounted revival [of *Macbeth*] at the Lyceum is not the *femme d'une corruption colossale, dissimulée, hypocrite*, as conceived by Ristori, but a genial, impulsive, and loving wife who, though displaying a more than Jesuitical indifference to means, never once excites the repugnance of the spectator. Even in the murder scene, when she returns to finish the task left half-done by her irresolute husband, the feeling is not so much one of horror as of incongruity and surprise. What on earth is this graceful, amiable, and picturesque woman doing in these shambles? is the question that rises most naturally to our lips. How did she get there? And being there, why doesn't she faint or go off into hysterics? . . . Of the relentless, Agrippina-like creature whose motto was *Occidat dum imperet*, or, it may be, *dum imperem*, there is not a trace. Conjugal sympathy and self-sacrifice are the keynotes of her character.

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See the *Jahrbuch d. d. Shakespeare-Gesellschaft*, 1898, for a review of the French version of *Macbeth* by Ducis. The reviewer speaks of the *motive* of the 'exorbitanten Bosheit,' the extraordinary wickedness, of Shakspere's Lady Macbeth as an inexplicable mystery. In his version Ducis attempts a suggestion of this motive.

See 'Moot Points for the Discussion of *Macbeth*,' *Poet-lore*, vol. ii.

Should any reader, having looked faithfully and thoughtfully "here, upon this picture, and on this," be yet unable to conclude which picture portrays truly the poet's conception, he may find solace, perhaps, though no help toward a solution, in a poet's comment on the play. In *A Study of Shakespeare* (London, 1880), Algernon Charles Swinburne has said, "There can hardly be a single point of incident or of character on which the youngest reader will not find himself at one with the oldest, the dullest with the brightest among the scholars of Shakespeare. It would be an equal waste of working hours or of playtime if any of these should devote any part of either a whole-schoolday or a holiday to remark or to rhapsody on the character of Macbeth . . . or of Lady Macbeth. He that runs, let him read: and he that hath ears, let him hear."

The defective state of the text of *Macbeth*, to which reference has been made in the preceding pages, is, doubtless, the explanation of these extraordinary differences in the interpretation of the relations between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, and in the interpretation of the significance of the play as a whole.

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THE TRAGEDY OF MACBETH.

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

DUNCAN, *king of Scotland.*
MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, } *his sons.*
MACBETH, BANQUO, } *generals of the King's army.*
MACDUFF, LENNOX, ROSS, MENTEITH, ANGUS, CAITHNESS, } *noblemen of Scotland.*
FLEANCE, *son to Banquo.*
SIWARD, *earl of Northumberland. general of the English forces.*
Young SIWARD, *his son.*
SEYTON, *an officer attending on Macbeth.*
Boy, *son to Macduff.*
An English Doctor.
A Scotch Doctor.
A Sergeant.
A Porter.
An Old Man.

Lady MACBETH.
Lady MACDUFF.
Gentlewoman attending on Lady Macbeth.

HECATE.
Three Witches.
Apparitions.

Lords, Gentlemen, Officers, Soldiers, Murderers,
Attendants, and Messengers.

SCENE: *Scotland; England.*

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MACBETH.

ACT FIRST.

SCENE I. *A desert place.*

Thunder and lightning. Enter three Witches.

First Witch. When shall we three meet again
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

Scene i.—1. "The true reason for the first appearance of the Witches," according to Coleridge, "is to strike the key-note of the character of the whole drama." "The play opens fittingly," says Chambers, "in an atmosphere of moral and physical gloom. . . . This is a tragedy of the triumph of evil: we are in a world of moral anarchy, symbolized by the withered beings, to whom 'foul is fair.'" "In *Macbeth*, indeed," says Lowell, "the Weird Sisters introduce an element very like Fate." "These witches or weird sisters," Boas is persuaded, "are the embodiment, in visible form, of the malignant influences in nature, which are ever on the alert to establish an unholy alliance with the criminal instincts of the human heart." To Gervinus the Weird Sisters are simply "the embodiment of inward temptation"; and Moulton has written, "He [Shakspere] uses the agency of the supernatural to intensify and illuminate human action, not to determine it." To Ulrici, however, the Weird Sisters are 'the motives' to Macbeth's fall; and Dowden insists that "we move through the world subject to accumulated forces of evil and of good outside ourselves," that "the history of the race, and the social medium in which we live and breathe, have created forces of good and evil which are independent of the will of each individual man and woman."

Spalding, in *Elizabethan Demonology*, has said of this scene that it is, in fact, "the fag-end of a witches' sabbath, which, if fully represented, would bear a strong resemblance to the scene at the commencement of the fourth act. But a long scene on such a subject

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Second Witch. When the hurlyburly's done,
When the battle's lost and won.
Third Witch. That will be ere the set of sun.
First Witch. Where the place?
Second Witch. Upon the heath.
Third Witch. There to meet with Macbeth.
First Witch. I come, Graymalkin!
Second Witch. Paddock calls.
Third Witch. Anon. 10

Scene i.—3. **hurlyburly**, 'an uprore and tumultuous stirre.'

8. **Graymalkin**, a cat,—a name once almost as common for a cat as 'Towser' for a dog or 'Bayard' for a horse or 'Reynard' for a fox. It was believed that the form of a cat was especially affected by witches. A disagreeable old woman is even yet sometimes disrespectfully called 'an old cat.' In the Dresden art gallery there is a picture of three old women, entitled 'Three Old Cats.'

9. **Paddock**, a toad.

10. **Anon**, presently, immediately, 'coming.'

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would be tedious and unmeaning at the commencement of the play. The audience is therefore left to assume that the witches have met, performed their conjurations, obtained from the evil spirits the information concerning Macbeth's career that they desired to obtain, and perhaps have been commanded by the fiends to perform the mission they subsequently carry through. All that is needed for the dramatic effect is a slight hint of probable diabolical interference, and that Macbeth is to be the special object of it; and this is done in as artistic a manner as is perhaps imaginable. In the first scene they obtain their information; in the second they utter their prediction."

For further comment on the Weird Sisters, see the Introduction, page 28.

10. The witches are here responding to the summons of their familiars. These familiars were supposed to be devils attendant upon witches 'in the likenesse of todes and cats.' The familiar of the third witch is, presumably, Harpier, mentioned in IV. i. 3, "Harpier cries, 'Tis time, 'tis time.'"

The royal author, who was King of England when Shakspere's witches first responded to the calls of Paddock and Graymalkin, and who had himself, as he believed, suffered grievous peril through the ill-will of witches, had recently expressed his personal convic-

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All. Fair is foul, and foul is fair:
Hover through the fog and filthy air. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *A camp near Forres.*

Alarum within. *Enter* DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, LENNOX, *with* Attendants, *meeting a bleeding* Sergeant.

Duncan. What bloody man is that? He can report,
As seemeth by his plight, of the revolt
The newest state.

Malcolm. This is the sergeant
Who like a good and hardy soldier fought
'Gainst my captivity. Hail, brave friend!

---

tion as to the real nature of these familiars in the following words, "To some of the baser sort he [the devil] obliges himself to appeare at their calling upon him, by such a proper name which he shews unto them, either in likeness of a Dog, a Cat, an Ape, or such-like other beast, or else to answere by a voice only."

In *The Witch of Edmonton*, written by contemporaries of Shakspere, we read

> I have heard old beldams
> Talk of familiars in the shape of mice,
> Rats, ferrets, weasels, and I wot not what.

It is of interest to recall in this connection that, even in the nineteenth century and in the great drama of the century, Mephistopheles is

> The lord of rats and also mice,
> Of flies and frogs and bugs and lice.

Mother Sawyer, in *The Witch of Edmonton*, is attended by the devil in the shape of a black dog. Similarly, in Goethe's *Faust*, Faust's companion and guide in his 'personally conducted' tour of the world appears to him first in the form of 'den schwarzen Hund,' a black dog, which follows him home from the fields at the close of a beautiful holiday, disturbing the serenity of his mood and the quiet of his study (*Sei ruhig Pudel!*), until finally,—swollen to the size of a 'Nile horse,' 'with fiery eyes, teeth terrible to see,'—successfully exorcised by the aid of 'Solomon's key' and a threat of 'the threefold dazzling glow,' the emblem of the Trinity. From

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Say to the king the knowledge of the broil
As thou didst leave it.
Sergeant. Doubtful it stood;
As two spent swimmers, that do cling together
And choke their art. The merciless Macdonwald—
Worthy to a rebel, for to that
The multiplying villanies of nature
Do swarm upon him—from the western isles
Of kerns and gallowglasses is supplied;
And fortune, on his damned quarrel smiling,
Show'd like a rebel's whore: but all's too weak:
For brave Macbeth—well he deserves that name—
Disdaining fortune, with his brandish'd steel
Which smoked with bloody execution,
Like valour's minion carved out his passage
Till he faced the slave;

Scene ii.—9. **choke their art**, *i. e.*, each renders the skill of the other useless.

10. **for to that**, for to that end.

13. **Of kerns and gallowglasses. Of**, with. **kerns** (light-armed), **gallowglasses** (heavy-armed) Irish soldiers.

15. **show'd**, appeared. "The meaning is that Fortune, while she smiled on him, deceived him" (Malone).

19. **valour's minion**, valour's favorite.

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the mist-like figure of the beast Mephistopheles steps forth 'clad as a travelling scholar.' But as Shakspere, assenting to the current belief that witches could assume the form of any animal they chose though the tail would commonly be lacking, makes the witch describe herself (I. iii. 9) as like a rat 'without a tail,' so Goethe represents Mephistopheles as lacking a foot, that is, as encumbered with the devil's cloven hoof instead. Thus in the realm of literature as in the realm of nature may be observed the 'persistence of types.'

Scene ii.—16. **brave Macbeth.** Note the first descriptive term applied to Macbeth and the first impression given the reader in regard to him. "What is significant in the fact that this man [the sergeant], severely wounded and weak from loss of blood, is so enthusiastic over his commander? What is the attitude of the loyal army of Scotland toward Macbeth?"—*Pattee.*

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Which ne'er shook hands, nor bade farewell to him,
Till he unseam'd from the nave to the chaps,
And fix'd his head upon our battlements.
Duncan. O valiant cousin! worthy gentleman!
Sergeant. As whence the sun 'gins his reflection
Shipwrecking storms and direful thunders break,
So from that spring whence comfort seem'd to come
Discomfort swells. Mark, king of Scotland, mark:
No sooner justice had, with valour arm'd,
Compell'd these skipping kerns to trust their heels,
But the Norweyan lord, surveying vantage,
With furbish'd arms and new supplies of men,
Began a fresh assault.
Duncan. Dismay'd not this
Our captains, Macbeth and Banquo?
Sergeant. Yes;
As sparrows eagles, or the hare the lion.
If I say sooth, I must report they were
As cannons overcharged with double cracks; so they
Doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe:
Except they meant to bathe in reeking wounds,
Or memorize another Golgotha,
I cannot tell—
But I am faint; my gashes cry for help.

21. **Which ne'er.** The antecedent of *which* may be either *slave* or *Macbeth*. See Note.

22. **nave**, navel. **chaps** (pronounced chŏps), jaws.

25. **As whence**, etc. Cf. D'Avenant's version of this passage,

> But then this Day-break of our Victory
> Serv'd but to light us into other Dangers,
> That spring from whence our hopes did seem to rise.

27. **spring**, source.

31. **surveying vantage** (advantage), *i. e.*, perceiving a favorable opportunity.

32. **furbish'd**, burnished.

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41. "The irregularity in the length of this line is dramatically effective. The soldier breaks off unable to proceed for loss of blood."

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Duncan. So well thy words become thee as thy wounds;
They smack of honour both. Go get him surgeons.
[*Exit* Sergeant, *attended.*
Who comes here?

Enter Ross.

Malcolm. The worthy thane of Ross.
Lennox. What a haste looks through his eyes! So should he look
That seems to speak things strange.
Ross. God save the king!
Duncan. Whence camest thou, worthy thane?
Ross. From Fife, great king;
Where the Norweyan banners flout the sky
And fan our people cold. Norway himself
With terrible numbers,
Assisted by that most disloyal traitor
The thane of Cawdor, began a dismal conflict;
Till that Bellona's bridegroom, lapp'd in proof,
Confronted him with self-comparisons,
Point against point rebellious, arm 'gainst arm,
Curbing his lavish spirit: and, to conclude,
The victory fell on us.
Duncan. Great happiness!
Ross. That now
Sweno, the Norways' king, craves composition;
Nor would we deign him burial of his men
Till he disbursed at Saint Colme's Inch
Ten thousand dollars to our general use.
Duncan. No more that thane of Cawdor shall deceive

54. **Till that**, till. **Bellona's bridegroom**, Macbeth. Bellona was the Roman goddess of war. **lapp'd in proof**, clad in proved armor.
57. **lavish**, prodigal, unrestrained, insolent.
58. **That now**, so that now.
59. **craves composition**, *i. e.*, sues for terms of peace.

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Our bosom interest: go pronounce his present death,
And with his former title greet Macbeth.

Ross. I'll see it done.

Duncan. What he hath lost, noble Macbeth hath won.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *A heath.*

Thunder. Enter the three Witches.

First Witch. Where hast thou been, sister?

Second Witch. Killing swine.

Third Witch. Sister, where thou?

First Witch. A sailor's wife had chestnuts in her lap,
And mounch'd, and mounch'd, and mounch'd. 'Give me,' quoth I:
'Aroint thee, witch!' the rump-fed ronyon cries.

64. **bosom interest**, 'close and intimate affection.' **present**, immediate.

Scene iii.—6. **Aroint thee**, avaunt, begone. **the rump-fed ronyon**,—a term of abuse.

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67. **noble Macbeth hath won.** What impression does the reader have of Macbeth at this point in the drama?

"In this scene Shakespeare, after his manner, puts us briefly in possession of the situation between Macbeth and Duncan. Macbeth is high in favour with the king, and, with the aid of Banquo, has repelled in one day rebels at home and foes from abroad. The best side of his character, his personal courage and resource in war, is brought out. He is 'valour's minion' and 'Bellona's bridegroom.'" —*Chambers.*

"After having by the appearance of the witches—as well as by the character of the half fabulous times in the far north and its corresponding grand, wild scenery—indicated the point of view from which the drama is conceived, the poet then introduces the heralds of Macbeth's glory and greatness. The mighty, victorious hero is presented to us in all his magnificence even before we have ourselves seen him."—*Ulrici.*

Scene iii.—See the Introduction (pp. 28–30) for a statement respecting the widespread prevalence of the belief in the existence and the power of witches and an estimate of the hundreds of thousands who were put to death during the life-time of Shakspere.

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Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master o' the Tiger:
But in a sieve I'll thither sail,
And, like a rat without a tail,
I'll do, I'll do, and I'll do.
Second Witch. I'll give thee a wind.
First Witch. Thou'rt kind.
Third Witch. And I another.
First Witch. I myself have all the other;
And the very ports they blow,
All the quarters that they know
I' the shipman's card.
I will drain him dry as hay:
Sleep shall neither night nor day
Hang upon his pent-house lid;
He shall live a man forbid:
Weary se'nnights nine times nine
Shall he dwindle, peak, and pine:
Though his bark cannot be lost,
Yet it shall be tempest-tost.
Look what I have.

14. **the other**, the others.

15. **blow**, blow upon.

20. **his pent-house lid**, *i. e.*, his eyelids.

21. **a man forbid**, a man accursed, *i. e.*, under a curse or prayed against (the original meaning of 'bid' being 'pray').

23. **peak**, dwindle away. Concerning the power of witches, cf. Charles Lamb's dramatic sketch, *The Witch*. **Posters**, speedy travellers. Cf. *post*-haste.

24. **Though his bark cannot be lost.** Though for some undivulged reason the bark of this particular seaman was exempt, yet it did not occur to the spectators who first heard this play to interpret this line as a general statement of the powers or of the limitations of the powers of witches. The announcement of the same witch a moment later, "Here I have a pilot's thumb, Wreck'd as homeward he did come," appealed to the convictions and the fears of the sailors in the pit and the king upon the throne.

25. **tempest-tost.** "During the Middle Ages this doctrine of the diabolical origin of storms went on gathering strength. . . . The

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Second Witch. Show me, show me.
First Witch. Here I have a pilot's thumb,
Wreck'd as homeward he did come. [*Drum within.*
Third Witch. A drum, a drum!
Macbeth doth come.
All. The weird sisters, hand in hand,
Posters of the sea and land,
Thus do go about, about:
Thrice to thine, and thrice to mine,
And thrice again, to make up nine.
Peace! the charm's wound up.

Enter MACBETH *and* BANQUO.

Macbeth. So foul and fair a day I have not seen.
Banquo. How far is 't call'd to Forres? What are these
So wither'd, and so wild in their attire,
That look not like the inhabitants o' the earth,
And yet are on 't? Live you? or are you aught

32. **hand in hand.** The Weird Sisters here join hands and dance round and round in a ring, three rounds for each witch.

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lives of the saints and the chronicles of the Middle Ages were filled with it. Poetry and painting accepted the idea and developed it. Dante wedded it to verse. . . . In [the illustrations to] the *Compendium Maleficarum* (Milan, 1608) [two years, that is, after *Macbeth* was written] . . . we may see the witch, *in propria persona*, riding the diabolical goat through the clouds while the storm rages around and beneath her. . . . Some curious questions incidentally arose. It was mooted among the orthodox authorities whether the damage done by storms should or should not be assessed upon the property of convicted witches."—*Andrew D. White.*

38. **So foul and fair a day.** "Shakspere intimates by this that although Macbeth has not yet set eyes upon these hags, the connection is already established between his soul and them. Their spells have already wrought upon his blood."—*Dowden.*

"Holinshed says that Macbeth and Banquo were 'sporting by the way'; and Shakspere seems to have intended this remark as the

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That man may question? You seem to understand me,
By each at once her choppy finger laying
Upon her skinny lips: you should be women,
And yet your beards forbid me to interpret
That you are so.

Macbeth. Speak, if you can: what are you?

First Witch. All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, thane of Glamis!

Second Witch. All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, thane of Cawdor!

Third Witch. All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter!

Banquo. Good sir, why do you start, and seem to fear
Things that do sound so fair? I' the name of truth,
Are ye fantastical, or that indeed
Which outwardly ye show? My noble partner
You greet with present grace and great prediction
Of noble having and of royal hope,
That he seems rapt withal: to me you speak not:
If you can look into the seeds of time,
And say which grain will grow and which will not,
Speak then to me, who neither beg nor fear
Your favours nor your hate.

43. **question**, converse with. Note the inflection required in oral reading.

45. **should be**, ought to be, appear to be.

53. **fantastical**, imaginary.

57. **rapt withal**, *i. e.*, carried away with it, as in ecstasy.

58. **look into the seeds of time.** See Snider, p. 37.

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concluding sentence of a conversation full of good-humor and fine spirits that come from success. That the words recall to the audience the words of the witches, has no bearing upon the tone in which Macbeth uttered them."—*Manly.*

51. **why do you start?** Why *does* Macbeth start? If this is your first reading of the play, set down your impression of the reason why in order to satisfy your remembrance the more strongly, and read on. Later read the discussion on pp. 9–19.

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First Witch. Hail!
Second Witch. Hail!
Third Witch. Hail!
First Witch. Lesser than Macbeth, and greater.
Second Witch. Not so happy, yet much happier.
Third Witch. Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none:
So all hail, Macbeth and Banquo!
First Witch. Banquo and Macbeth, all hail!
Macbeth. Stay, you imperfect speakers, tell me more:
By Sinel's death I know I am thane of Glamis;
But how of Cawdor? the thane of Cawdor lives,
A prosperous gentleman; and to be king
Stands not within the prospect of belief,
No more than to be Cawdor. Say from whence
You owe this strange intelligence? or why
Upon this blasted heath you stop our way
With such prophetic greeting? Speak, I charge you.
[Witches *vanish.*
Banquo. The earth hath bubbles as the water has,
And these are of them: whither are they vanished?
Macbeth. Into the air, and what seem'd corporal melted
As breath into the wind. Would they had stay'd!
Banquo. Were such things here as we do speak about?
Or have we eaten on the insane root
That takes the reason prisoner?
Macbeth. Your children shall be kings.
Banquo. You shall be king.
Macbeth. And thane of Cawdor too: were it not so?
Banquo. To the selfsame tune and words. Who's here?

Enter ROSS *and* ANGUS.

71. **Sinel**, the name of Macbeth's father.
76. **owe**, own, possess.
81. **corporal**, *i. e.*, corporeal, a word not found in Shakspere.
84. **insane**, *i. e.*, making insane. Cf. 'some sweet *oblivious* antidote,' V. iii. 43.

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Ross. The king hath happily received, Macbeth,
The news of thy success: and when he reads
Thy personal venture in the rebels' fight,
His wonders and his praises do contend
Which should be thine or his: silenced with that,
In viewing o'er the rest o' the selfsame day,
He finds thee in the stout Norweyan ranks,
Nothing afeard of what thyself didst make,
Strange images of death. As thick as hail
Came post with post, and every one did bear
Thy praises in his kingdom's great defence,
And pour'd them down before him.
Angus. We are sent
To give thee, from our royal master, thanks;
Only to herald thee into his sight,
Not pay thee.
Ross. And for an earnest of a greater honour,
He bade me, from him, call thee thane of Cawdor
In which addition, hail, most worthy thane!
For it is thine.
Banquo. What, can the devil speak true?
Macbeth. The thane of Cawdor lives: why do you dress me
In borrow'd robes?
Angus. Who was the thane lives yet,
But under heavy judgment bears that life
Which he deserves to lose. Whether he was combined
With those of Norway, or did line the rebel
With hidden help and vantage, or that with both
He labour'd in his country's wreck, I know not;
But treasons capital, confess'd and proved,
Have overthrown him.

92. **do contend.** See Note, p. 175.
104. **an earnest,** a foretaste, *i. e.*, an instalment.
106. **addition,** title,—something added, that is, to the name.
112. **line,** strengthen, reinforce.

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Macbeth. [*Aside.*] Glamis, and thane of Cawdor:
The greatest is behind.—Thanks for your pains.—
Do you not hope your children shall be kings,
When those that gave the thane of Cawdor to me
Promised no less to them?
Banquo. That, trusted home,
Might yet enkindle you unto the crown,
Besides the thane of Cawdor. But 'tis strange:
And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,
The instruments of darkness tell us truths,
Win us with honest trifles, to betray 's
In deepest consequence.
Cousins, a word, I pray you.
Macbeth. [*Aside.*] Two truths are told,
As happy prologues to the swelling act
Of the imperial theme.—I thank you, gentlemen.—
[*Aside*] This supernatural soliciting
Cannot be ill; cannot be good: if ill,
Why hath it given me earnest of success,
Commencing in a truth? I am thane of Cawdor:
If good, why do I yield to that suggestion
Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair
And make my seated heart knock at my ribs,
Against the use of nature? Present fears
Are less than horrible imaginings:
My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,
Shakes so my single state of man that function
Is smother'd in surmise, and nothing is
But what is not.

134. **suggestion**, temptation.
135. **unfix my hair**, *i. e.*, make my hair stand on end.
136. **seated**, fixed firmly.
140, 141. **single**, weak (White). **function**, ability to act. **surmise**, imagination, apprehension. "All powers of action are oppressed and crushed by one overwhelming image in the mind, and nothing is present to me but that which is really future" (Johnson).

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Banquo. Look, how our partner's rapt.

Macbeth. [*Aside.*] If chance will have me king, why, chance may crown me,
Without my stir.

Banquo. New honours come upon him,
Like our strange garments, cleave not to their mould
But with the aid of use.

Macbeth. [*Aside.*] Come what come may,
Time and the hour runs through the roughest day.

Banquo. Worthy Macbeth, we stay upon your leisure.

145. **strange**, new.

144–146. "What was Banquo's explanation of Macbeth's 'rapt' state? Do you think he was honest in this explanation?"—*Pattee.*

153–156. The last four lines of Macbeth's speech are, as a matter of course, heard by Banquo alone.

Why does Banquo reply, 'Very gladly'? In Holinshed Macbeth "communicating his purposed intent *with his trustie frendes, amongst whome Banquho was the chiefest, upon confidence of theyr promised ayde*, he slewe the king at Enuernes," etc.

Note every reference to Banquo in the play in order to determine whether Shakspere's Banquo uniformly keeps his 'bosom franchised and allegiance clear' or whether there are in his character occasional reminiscences of Holinshed's Banquho, 'the chiefest' among Macbeth's 'trustie frendes.'

At what point in this scene does the 'exciting force,' or motive, of the play enter? Does it come from within the hero, or from an external source?

"Returning from battle, he meets on a lonely heath a company of witches, who hail him as one who shall be king hereafter . . . now his warlike courage is changed to unlawful aspiration . . ."—*Salvini.*

"Macbeth would not have thought of attaining the crown without the prophecies of the witches."—*Brandl.*

". . . before the play opens the essential surrender of spirit has taken place, . . . Macbeth has made the destiny which the Witches reveal."—*Moulton.*

Before re-reading the play read the comment in the Introduction, pp. 9–19.

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Macbeth. Give me your favour: my dull brain was wrought
With things forgotten. Kind gentlemen, your pains
Are register'd where every day I turn
The leaf to read them. Let us toward the king.
Think upon what hath chanced, and at more time,
The interim having weigh'd it, let us speak
Our free hearts each to other.
Banquo. Very gladly.
Macbeth. Till then, enough. Come, friends. [*Exeunt.*

Scene IV. *Forres. The palace.*

Flourish. *Enter* Duncan, Malcolm, Donalbain, Lennox *and* Attendants.

Duncan. Is execution done on Cawdor? Are not
Those in commission yet return'd?
Malcolm. My liege,
They are not yet come back. But I have spoke
With one that saw him die, who did report
That very frankly he confess'd his treasons,
Implored your highness' pardon and set forth
A deep repentance: nothing in his life
Became him like the leaving it; he died
As one that had been studied in his death,
To throw away the dearest thing he owed
As 'twere a careless trifle.
Duncan. There's no art
To find the mind's construction in the face:

149. **favour**, pardon. **wrought**, agitated.
154. **interim**. Either '*in* the interim' (Abbott) or the intervening time is personified.
Scene iv.—6. **set forth**, manifested.
10. **owed**, owned.
11. **careless**, *i. e.*, 'that of which no care is taken.' Cf. 'sightless,' *i. e.*, 'invisible,' I. v. 50 and I. vii. 23.

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He was a gentleman on whom I built
An absolute trust.

Enter MACBETH, BANQUO, ROSS, *and* ANGUS.

O worthiest cousin!
The sin of my ingratitude even now
Was heavy on me: thou art so far before,
That swiftest wing of recompense is slow
To overtake thee. Would thou hadst less deserved,
That the proportion both of thanks and payment
Might have been mine! only I have left to say,
More is thy due than more than all can pay.

Macbeth. The service and the loyalty I owe,
In doing it, pays itself. Your highness' part
Is to receive our duties: and our duties
Are to your throne and state children and servants;
Which do but what they should, by doing every thing
Safe toward your love and honour.

Duncan. Welcome hither:
I have begun to plant thee, and will labour
To make thee full of growing. Noble Banquo,
That hast no less deserved, nor must be known
No less to have done so: let me infold thee
And hold thee to my heart.

Banquo. There if I grow,
The harvest is your own.

Duncan. My plenteous joys,
Wanton in fulness, seek to hide themselves
In drops of sorrow. Sons, kinsmen, thanes,
And you whose places are the nearest, know,
We will establish our estate upon
Our eldest, Malcolm, whom we name hereafter

19. That the (due or proper) proportion might have been mine (to give).

27. **safe toward**, *i. e.*, 'so as to preserve' (Kittredge).

34. **wanton**, unrestrained.

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The Prince of Cumberland: which honour must
Not unaccompanied invest him only,
But signs of nobleness, like stars, shall shine
On all deservers. From hence to Inverness,
And bind us further to you.

Macbeth. The rest is labour, which is not used for you:
I'll be myself the harbinger, and make joyful
The hearing of my wife with your approach;
So humbly take my leave.

Duncan. My worthy Cawdor!

Macbeth. [*Aside.*] The Prince of Cumberland! that is a step
On which I must fall down, or else o'erleap,
For in my way it lies. Stars, hide your fires;
Let not light see my black and deep desires:
The eye wink at the hand; yet let that be
Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see. [*Exit.*

Duncan. True, worthy Banquo; he is full so valiant,
And in his commendations I am fed;
It is a banquet to me. Let's after him,
Whose care is gone before to bid us welcome:
It is a peerless kinsman. [*Flourish. Exeunt.*

Scene V. *Inverness. Macbeth's castle.*

Enter Lady Macbeth, *reading a letter.*

Lady Macbeth. 'They met me in the day of success; and I have learned by the perfectest report, they have more in them than mortal knowledge. When I burned

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54. **True, worthy Banquo.** Duncan's speech is the continuation of an unheard talk with Banquo about Macbeth while the latter reveals to us his awakened ambition and foreshadows the crime,—"a touch of dramatic art," says Richard Grant White, "which shows how constantly Shakespeare kept the stage and the audience in mind."

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in desire to question them further, they made themselves air, into which they vanished. Whiles I stood rapt in the wonder of it, came missives from the king, who all-hailed me "Thane of Cawdor;" by which title, before, these weird sisters saluted me, and referred me to the coming on of time, with "Hail, king that shalt be!" This have I thought good to deliver thee, my dearest partner of greatness, that thou mightst not lose the dues of rejoicing, by being ignorant of what greatness is promised thee. Lay it to thy heart, and farewell.'

Scene v.—7. **missives**, messengers.

Scene v.—14. "What does the letter contain preceding the part that we hear Lady Macbeth read? Does it suggest to her anything that it does not say?"—*F. T. Baker.* If so, does she now for the first time hear and entertain this suggestion? See comment on I. vii. 48.

"*Lay it to thy heart:* little need had he for saying that. His ambition was already hers, and had burned itself into her very soul. She had looked at the matter in every aspect of it, and did not shrink from contemplating the way that must ultimately be travelled—the way of blood—that she might share with her lord the crown of Duncan."—*Robert Munro,* in *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy.*

"In the opening of the tragedy, when she reads her husband's letter informing her of the prediction of his coming greatness, she conceives the idea of the crime that is to insure it."—*Salvini,* in *The Century Magazine.*

"It is no longer needful to labour the point that Lady Macbeth is not a Northern Fury, a virago of abnormal depravity and forbidding aspect."—*Boas.*

"In the case of Lady Macbeth, the old-fashioned view of her as a second Clytæmnestra has long been steadily giving way before a conception higher at least on the intellectual side."—*Moulton.*

In Maclise's painting of the banquet scene Lady Macbeth is represented as "a woman of large and coarse development; a Scandinavian amazon, the muscles of whose brawny arms could only have been developed to their great size by hard and frequent use; a

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Glamis thou art, and Cawdor, and shalt be
What thou art promised: yet do I fear thy nature;
It is too full o' the milk of human kindness

---

woman of whose fists her husband might well be afraid."—*Bucknill.* For Dr. Bucknill's comment on this picture, see p. 46.

Dowden speaks of Lady Macbeth's "delicate frame" filled with "high-strung nervous energy," of the "white flame of resolution" that "glows through her delicate organization like light through an alabaster lamp," of the ineffaceable stain on the little hand of her who "with her delicate sense" will "sicken at the smell of blood." To Dowden, manifestly, Lady Macbeth is not an Amazon of coarse organization.

"In this astonishing creature [Lady Macbeth] . . . are associated all the subjugating powers of intellect and all the charms and graces of female beauty."—*Mrs. Siddons.*

"It is particularly observable that in Lady Macbeth's concentrated, strong-nerved ambition . . . there is yet a touch of womanhood: she is ambitious less for herself than for her husband. . . . The strength of her affection adds strength to her ambition. . . . Nor is there anythir[illegible]igar in her ambition; as the strength of her affections lends [illegible] it something profound and concentrated, so her splendid imagination invests the object of her desire with its own radiance. We cannot trace in her grand and capacious mind that it is the mere baubles and trappings of royalty which dazzle and allure her: hers is the sin of the 'star-bright apostate,' and she plunges with her husband into the abyss of guilt to procure for 'all their days and nights sole sovereign sway and masterdom.' She revels, she luxuriates, in her dream of power. She reaches at the golden diadem which is to sear her brain; she perils her life and soul for its attainment, with an enthusiasm as perfect, a faith as settled, as that of the martyr who sees at the stake heaven and its crowns of glory opening upon him."—*Mrs. Jameson.*

Ulrici holds that fundamentally different conceptions of the character of Lady Macbeth may each be justifiable, inasmuch as the motives which determine Lady Macbeth's conduct are not clearly stated in the play. As an explanation of this want of clear characterization, he suggests that the play as we have it is only a mutilated stage version "with great abbreviations, more especially in the first part." See the Introduction, p. 14.

18. **the milk of human kindness.** Professor Moulton holds that "this phrase," the meaning of which is wholly misapprehended,

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To catch the nearest way: thou wouldst be great;
Art not without ambition, but without
The illness should attend it: what thou wouldst highly,
That wouldst thou holily; wouldst not play false,
And yet wouldst wrongly win: thou 'ldst have, great Glamis,
That which cries 'Thus thou must do, if thou have it;
And that which rather thou dost fear to do
Than wishest should be undone.' Hie thee hither,
That I may pour my spirits in thine ear,
And chastise with the valour of my tongue
All that impedes thee from the golden round,
Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem
To have thee crown'd withal.

Enter a Messenger.

What is your tidings?

Messenger. The king comes here to-night.

Lady Macbeth. Thou 'rt mad to say it:
Is not thy master with him? who, were 't so,
Would have inform'd for preparation.

Messenger. So please you, it is true: our thane is coming:
One of my fellows had the speed of him,
Who, almost dead for breath, had scarcely more
Than would make up his message.

Lady Macbeth. Give him tending;
He brings great news. [*Exit* Messenger.
The raven himself is hoarse

21. **The illness should**, the evil nature which should.
29. **the golden round**, the crown.
30. **metaphysical**, supernatural.

"divorced from its context and become the most familiar of all commonplaces, has done more than anything else towards giving a false twist to the general conception of Macbeth's character."—See *Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist*, p. 149.

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That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
Under my battlements. Come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
And fill me, from the crown to the toe, top-full
Of direst cruelty! make thick my blood,
Stop up the access and passage to remorse,
That no compunctious visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between
The effect and it! Come to my woman's breasts,
And take my milk for gall, you murdering ministers,
Wherever in your sightless substances
You wait on nature's mischief! Come, thick night,
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,
To cry 'Hold, hold!'

Enter MACBETH.

Great Glamis! worthy Cawdor!
Greater than both, by the all-hail hereafter!
Thy letters have transported me beyond
This ignorant present, and I feel now
The future in the instant.

40. **fatal.** For comment by James Russell Lowell, see *Among my Books*, p. 186.

42. **mortal**, murderous, deadly.

45. **remorse**, pity.

47. **keep peace**, etc., *i. e.*, interpose between her purpose and its realization. "If fear, compassion, or any other compunctious visitings, stand between a cruel purpose and its realization, they may be said to keep peace between them, as one who interferes between a violent man and the object of his wrath keeps peace" (Knight).

50. **sightless substances**, invisible forms. "Lady Macbeth's vivid psychology has led her to a refined form of the same conception of evil powers outside the will and acting upon it, which finds a cruder expression in the belief in witches."

55. **hold!** According to Tollet, capital punishment was inflicted upon "whosoever shall strike stroke at his adversary . . . if a third do cry *hold*." Cf. V. viii. 34.

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Macbeth. My dearest love,
Duncan comes here to-night.
Lady Macbeth. And when goes hence?
Macbeth. To-morrow, as he purposes.
Lady Macbeth. O, never
Shall sun that morrow see!
Your face, my thane, is as a book where men
May read strange matters. To beguile the time,
Look like the time; bear welcome in your eye,
Your hand, your tongue: look like the innocent flower,
But be the serpent under 't. He that's coming
Must be provided for: and you shall put
This night's great business into my dispatch;
Which shall to all our nights and days to come
Give solely sovereign sway and masterdom.
Macbeth. We will speak further.
Lady Macbeth. Only look up clear;
To alter favour ever is to fear:
Leave all the rest to me. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI. *Before Macbeth's castle.*

Hautboys and torches. Enter DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, BANQUO, LENNOX, MACDUFF, ROSS, ANGUS, *and* Attendants.

Duncan. This castle hath a pleasant seat; the air
Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself
Unto our gentle senses.

73. **To alter favour . . . fear**, to change countenance is ever a symptom of fear.

Scene vi.—1. **seat**, situation.

Scene vi.—"Can you point out how the author manages to throw about the scene at the opening such an atmosphere of security and peace? Why does he do this?"—*Sherman.* See Notes, p. 177.

"This scene has been greatly admired for its quiet and repose, contrasting so sharply with the preceding and the following. All

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Banquo. This guest of summer,
The temple-haunting martlet, does approve
By his loved mansionry that the heaven's breath
Smells wooingly here: no jutty, frieze,
Buttress, nor coign of vantage, but this bird
Hath made his pendant bed and procreant cradle:
Where they most breed and haunt, I have observed
The air is delicate.

Enter LADY MACBETH.

Duncan. See, see, our honour'd hostess! 10
The love that follows us sometime is our trouble,
Which still we thank as love. Herein I teach you
How you shall bid God 'ild us for your pains,
And thank us for your trouble.

Lady Macbeth. All our service
In every point twice done, and then done double,
Were poor and single business to contend
Against those honours deep and broad wherewith
Your majesty loads our house: for those of old,

4. **approve**, prove.
5. **mansionry**, abode, *i. e.*, its nest.
7. **coign of vantage**, convenient corner.
11. **follows**, attends. **sometime**, sometimes.
13. **God 'ild us**, God yield us, *i. e.*, reward us.
16. **contend Against**, vie with.

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the images are of peace and cheer; no *raven* now, no *hoarseness*, no *croaking*, no *fatal* ceremony, no menacing *battlements*."—*Sprague.*

"The contrast here cannot but be as intentional as it is marked. Every image is one of welcome, security, and confidence. The summer, one may well fancy, would be a very different hostess from her whom we have just seen expecting *them*. And why *temple-haunting*, unless because it suggests sanctuary? *O immaginativa, che si ne rubi delle cose di fuor*, how infinitely more precious are the inward ones thou givest in return! If all this be accident, it is at least one of those accidents of which only this man was ever capable."—*James Russell Lowell.*

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And the late dignities heap'd up to them,
We rest your hermits.
Duncan. Where's the thane of Cawdor?
We coursed him at the heels, and had a purpose
To be his purveyor: but he rides well,
And his great love, sharp as his spur, hath holp him
To his home before us. Fair and noble hostess,
We are your guest to-night.
Lady Macbeth. Your servants ever
Have theirs, themselves, and what is theirs, in compt,
To make their audit at your highness' pleasure,
Still to return your own.
Duncan. Give me your hand;
Conduct me to mine host: we love him highly,
And shall continue our graces towards him.
By your leave, hostess. [*Exeunt.*

Scene VII. *Macbeth's castle.*

Hautboys and torches. Enter a Sewer, *and divers* Servants *with dishes and service, and pass over the stage. Then enter* Macbeth.

Macbeth. If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly: if the assassination
Could trammel up the consequence, and catch,

19. **to them**, in addition to them.
20. **rest**, remain.
20. **your hermits**, your beadsmen, bound, that is, to pray for you.
22. **purveyor**, an officer of the king sent before to provide food for the king and his retinue, as the *harbinger* provided lodging. "There is here, then, a delicate compliment to Macbeth. The king meant to be his purveyor."—*Dalgleish.*
23. **holp**, helped.
26. **in compt**, in account, *i. e.*, held in trust or subject to account.

Scene vii.—1. **done.** Note the subtle double sense of *done.*
3. **trammel up**, catch and hold as in a net. The noun **trammel** means a net.

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With his surcease, success; that but this blow
Might be the be-all and the end-all here,
But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,
We 'ld jump the life to come. But in these cases
We still have judgement here; that we but teach
Bloody instructions, which being taught return
To plague the inventor: this even-handed justice
Commends the ingredients of our poison'd chalice
To our own lips. He's here in double trust:
First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,
Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,
Who should against his murderer shut the door,
Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan
Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead like angels trumpet-tongued against
The deep damnation of his taking-off;
And pity, like a naked new-born babe,
Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubin horsed
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
That tears shall drown the wind. I have no spur
To prick the sides of my intent, but only
Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself
And falls on the other.

4. **that but this blow**, so that this blow alone.

6. **But here**, even here. **this bank and shoal of time**, *i. e.*, this life, 'a shallow sandbank compared with the ocean of eternity.'

7. **jump**, risk. Macbeth would take his chances in the life to come if he were only sure of trammeling up the consequences in this life.

8. **still**, always. **that**, so that.

11. **commends**, offers, presents.

17. **his faculties**, his kingly powers, his official prerogatives. **meek**, meekly.

18. **clear**, blameless, guiltless.

23. **the sightless couriers of the air**, *i. e.*, the invisible winds.

25. **that**, so that.

28. **the other**, *i. e.*, the other side.

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Enter LADY MACBETH.

How now! what news?

Lady Macbeth. He has almost supp'd: why have you left the chamber?

Macbeth. Hath he ask'd for me?

Lady Macbeth. Know you not he has?

Macbeth. We will proceed no further in this business:
He hath honour'd me of late; and I have bought
Golden opinions from all sorts of people,
Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,
Not cast aside so soon.

Lady Macbeth. Was the hope drunk
Wherein you dress'd yourself? hath it slept since?
And wakes it now, to look so green and pale
At what it did so freely? From this time
Such I account thy love. Art thou afeard
To be the same in thine own act and valour
As thou art in desire? Wouldst thou have that
Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life,
And live a coward in thine own esteem,
Letting 'I dare not' wait upon 'I would,'
Like the poor cat i' the adage?

Macbeth. Prithee, peace:
I dare do all that may become a man;
Who dares do more is none.

Lady Macbeth. What beast was 't then
That made you break this enterprise to me?

34. **would**, should or require to.

42. **the ornament of life.** Either the crown or 'golden opinions.'

31–35. In ignoring the reason which Macbeth assigned for his hesitation about proceeding further in this business, and in taunting him with cowardice, was Lady Macbeth overbearing a scruple of conscience or a fear of consequences—of 'judgment here'?

48. **made you break this enterprise to me.** See the Introduction, pp. 11–14.

"The Complication [of the tragic plot] is that group of events

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When you durst do it, then you were a man;
And, to be more than what you were, you would
Be so much more the man. Nor time nor place
Did then adhere, and yet you would make both:
They have made themselves, and that their fitness now
Does unmake you. I have given suck, and know
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me:
I would, while it was smiling in my face,
Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums,
And dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn as you
Have done to this.

Macbeth. If we should fail?

Lady Macbeth. We fail!

But screw your courage to the sticking-place,
And we'll not fail. When Duncan is asleep—
Whereto the rather shall his day's hard journey
Soundly invite him—his two chamberlains

50. **And, to be more**, and by being more (*i. e.*, by becoming king).

52. **adhere**, accord.

53. **that their fitness**, *i. e.*, that fitness of theirs, that very fitness (of time and place).

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which precedes the decisive turn of fortune; the *Denouement* is that group of events which follows it. In strictness . . . the 'beginning' of the play should also be the 'beginning' of the Complication. But the Complication . . . frequently includes . . . certain incidents external to the action proper, but presupposed in the drama, and affecting the development of the piece."—Butcher, *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art.*

Is the 'beginning' of the play of *Macbeth* also the 'beginning' of the Complication?

54–59. "It seems almost incredible, but it is nevertheless true, that this frenzied appeal has over and over again been accepted as Lady Macbeth's judicial report upon her own character. A speech which is conceived in the most daring spirit of dramatic fitness, and which bears in every word the stamp of the special purpose for which it is uttered, is transformed into a prosaic statement of fact." —*Comyns Carr.*

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Will I with wine and wassail so convince,
That memory, the warder of the brain,
Shall be a fume, and the receipt of reason
A limbec only: when in swinish sleep
Their drenched natures lie as in a death,
What cannot you and I perform upon
The unguarded Duncan? what not put upon
His spongy officers, who shall bear the guilt
Of our great quell?
Macbeth. Bring forth men-children only;
For thy undaunted mettle should compose
Nothing but males. Will it not be received,
When we have mark'd with blood those sleepy two
Of his own chamber, and used their very daggers,
That they have done 't?
Lady Macbeth. Who dares receive it other,
As we shall make our griefs and clamour roar
Upon his death?
Macbeth. I am settled, and bend up
Each corporal agent to this terrible feat.

64. **wassail**, revelry. **convince**, overcome.
65-67. See Note, p. 180.
71. **spongy**, imbibing like a sponge.
72. **quell**, murder. Jack the Giant-Killer was formerly Jack the Giant-Queller.
77. **other**, otherwise.
78. **As**, seeing that.
79. **bend up**, strain, like a bow.
80. **Each corporal agent**, *i. e.*, every faculty or power of the body.

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69. "Do you detect any note of bravado in Lady Macbeth's words? Is she cool and calculating, or passionate and carried beyond herself by the excitement of the moment?"—*Pattee.*

"Do you find any hints or indications thus far as to Lady Macbeth's motive? Did she desire to be queen, or that her husband should be king?"—*Sherman.*

"In the energy of the action we hardly feel the immense pathos of this scene. For whatever reasons, Macbeth had concluded to

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Away, and mock the time with fairest show:
False face must hide what the false heart doth know.
[*Exeunt.*

81. **mock**, beguile. Cf. I. v. 64.

'proceed no further.' It is his wife who urges him on to crime and ruin; and we cannot doubt that she does it in love of him. Her sharp speech is only a goad, to drive him to the deed which she believes best for him."—*Helen Gray Cone.*

"And I say, I think the world is like Captain Esmond's company I spoke of anon; and could you see every man's career in life, you would find a woman clogging him; or clinging round his march and stopping him; or cheering him and goading him; . . . or fetching him the daggers and whispering 'Kill! yonder lies Duncan, and a crown, and an opportunity.'"—*Thackeray* (The History of Henry Esmond).

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ACT SECOND.

SCENE I. *Inverness. Court of* MACBETH'S *castle.*

Enter BANQUO, *and* FLEANCE *bearing a torch before him.*

Banquo. How goes the night, boy?

Fleance. The moon is down; I have not heard the clock.

Banquo. And she goes down at twelve.

Fleance. I take 't, 'tis later, sir.

Banquo. Hold, take my sword. There's husbandry in heaven,
Their candles are all out. Take thee that too.
A heavy summons lies like lead upon me,
And yet I would not sleep. Merciful powers,
Restrain in me the cursed thoughts that nature
Gives way to in repose!

Enter MACBETH, *and a* Servant *with a torch.*

Give me my sword.
Who's there?

Macbeth. A friend.

Banquo. What, sir, not yet at rest? The king's a-bed:
He hath been in unusual pleasure, and
Sent forth great largess to your offices:
This diamond he greets your wife withal,

Scene i.—4. **husbandry**, economy.
14. **largess**, gifts. **offices**, servants' quarters.

7. **And yet I would not sleep.** Why not? Are the 'cursed thoughts' that his nature gives way to in repose temptations that assail him personally or suspicions respecting Macbeth? See also pp. 72, 89, 104–107.

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By the name of most kind hostess; and shut up
In measureless content.
Macbeth. Being unprepared,
Our will became the servant to defect,
Which else should free have wrought.
Banquo. All's well.
I dreamt last night of the three weird sisters:
To you they have show'd some truth.
Macbeth. I think not of them:
Yet, when we can entreat an hour to serve,
We would spend it in some words upon that business,
If you would grant the time.
Banquo. At your kind'st leisure.
Macbeth. If you shall cleave to my consent, when 'tis,
It shall make honour for you.

16. **shut up.** See Note, p. 182.
19. **Which,** *i. e.*, our will.
28. **franchised,** free, unstained.

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17. "What excuse does Macbeth make for not being present during the evening?"—*Pattee.*

20. **I dreamt last night.** Why does Banquo introduce this subject?

25. "What can Macbeth mean by 'my consent, when 'tis'? Do you suppose he understands Banquo, and knows Banquo understands him and his purpose? Do you take it he wishes to avert suspicion, or to bid for Banquo's support? Does Banquo give him any encouragement? But if loyal to this extent, why does not Banquo put the king on his guard? What is the conversation on this last point given for?"—*Sherman.*

26. "It is hard to determine what attitude we are expected to regard Banquo as taking. Does he understand or suspect that Macbeth is planning murder, and wish to assent to it just far enough to be with Macbeth if he succeeds, and against him if he fails? or does he think Macbeth plans an open revolt, such as, according to Holinshed, was neither uncommon nor regarded as particularly base? or, finally, are we to refuse to attempt to settle the details of Banquo's character, merely accepting him as honest, and regarding

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Banquo. So I lose none
In seeking to augment it, but still keep
My bosom franchised and allegiance clear,
I shall be counsell'd.
Macbeth. Good repose the while!
Banquo. Thanks, sir: the like to you!
[*Exeunt* BANQUO *and* FLEANCE.
Macbeth. Go bid thy mistress, when my drink is ready,
She strike upon the bell. Get thee to bed.
[*Exit* Servant.
Is this a dagger which I see before me,
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee.
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible
To feeling as to sight? or art thou but
A dagger of the mind, a false creation,
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?
I see thee yet, in form as palpable
As this which now I draw.
Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going;
And such an instrument I was to use.
Mine eyes are made the fools o' the other senses,
Or else worth all the rest: I see thee still;
And on thy blade and dudgeon gouts of blood,
Which was not so before. There's no such thing:
It is the bloody business which informs
Thus to mine eyes. Now o'er the one half-world
Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse

36. **fatal**, sent by fate. **sensible**, perceptible, tangible.
39. **heat-oppressed**, troubled, that is, by heated fancies.
46. **dudgeon**, handle. **gouts**, drops.
48. **informs**, takes visible form or gives information.
50. **abuse**, deceive, misuse, or pervert.

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his actions and speeches as intended only to motive the actions and speeches of Macbeth and to advance the play?"—*Manly.*

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The curtain'd sleep; witchcraft celebrates
Pale Hecate's offerings; and wither'd murder,
Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,
Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,
With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design
Moves like a ghost. Thou sure and firm-set earth,
Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear
Thy very stones prate of my whereabout,
And take the present horror from the time,
Which now suits with it. Whiles I threat, he lives:
Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives.
[*A bell rings.*
I go, and it is done: the bell invites me.
Hear it not, Duncan, for it is a knell
That summons thee to heaven, or to hell. [*Exit.*

Scene II. *The same.*

Enter Lady Macbeth.

Lady Macbeth. That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold;
What hath quench'd them hath given me fire. Hark! Peace!
It was the owl that shriek'd, the fatal bellman,
Which gives the stern'st good-night. He is about it:
The doors are open, and the surfeited grooms
Do mock their charge with snores: I have drugg'd their possets,

54. **Whose howl's his watch.** "Who marks the periods of his night-watch by howling, as the sentinel by a cry" (Clarendon).

Scene ii.—1. **That . . . hath made me bold**, *i. e.*, wine.

3. **the owl.** The owl is a bird of ill omen in the mythology of many lands. **the fatal bellman.** The bellman, who was night-watch and who cried the hours, visited the condemned on the night before their execution; hence the epithet 'fatal.'

5. **the surfeited grooms**, the drunken chamberlains.

6. **possets**, drink.

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That death and nature do contend about them,
Whether they live or die.

Macbeth. [*Within.*] Who's there? what, ho!

Lady Macbeth. Alack, I am afraid they have awaked
And 'tis not done: the attempt and not the deed
Confounds us. Hark! I laid their daggers ready;
He could not miss 'em. Had he not resembled
My father as he slept, I had done 't.

Enter MACBETH.

My husband!

Macbeth. I have done the deed. Didst thou not hear a noise?

Lady Macbeth. I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry.
Did you not speak?

Macbeth. When?

Lady Macbeth. Now.

Macbeth. As I descended?

Lady Macbeth. Ay.

Macbeth. Hark!
Who lies i' the second chamber?

Lady Macbeth. Donalbain.

Macbeth. This is a sorry sight. [*Looking on his hands.*

Lady Macbeth. A foolish thought, to say a sorry sight.

Macbeth. There's one did laugh in 's sleep, and one cried 'Murder!'
That they did wake each other: I stood and heard them:
But they did say their prayers, and address'd them
Again to sleep.

11. **confounds**, ruins.
24. **address'd them**, made themselves ready.

13, 14. **Had he not resembled My father.** "Such touches must not be neglected in studying the character of Lady Macbeth. Her remorseless words and deeds do not come from a callous nature, but from a steeled will."—*Chambers.* See also pp. 46–55, 111, 153.

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Lady Macbeth. There are two lodged together.

Macbeth. One cried 'God bless us!' and 'Amen' the other,
As they had seen me with these hangman's hands:
Listening their fear, I could not say 'Amen,'
When they did say 'God bless us!'

Lady Macbeth. Consider it not so deeply.

Macbeth. But wherefore could not I pronounce 'Amen'?
I had most need of blessing, and 'Amen'
Stuck in my throat.

Lady Macbeth. These deeds must not be thought
After these ways; so, it will make us mad.

Macbeth. Methought I heard a voice cry 'Sleep no more!
Macbeth does murder sleep'—the innocent sleep,
Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleave of care,
The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath,
Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,
Chief nourisher in life's feast,—

Lady Macbeth. What do you mean?

Macbeth. Still it cried 'Sleep no more!' to all the house:
'Glamis hath murder'd sleep, and therefore Cawdor
Shall sleep no more: Macbeth shall sleep no more.'

Lady Macbeth. Who was it that thus cried? Why, worthy thane,
You do unbend your noble strength, to think

27. **As**, as if. **hangman**, executioner. Cf. 'the hangman's axe.'
28. **listening**, *i. e.*, listening to.
37. **ravell'd**, tangled. **sleave**, 'soft floss silk used for weaving' (Dyce).
39. **second course**, *i. e.*, the chief course at a feast.

35. **Sleep no more!** "These brief words involve the whole history of Macbeth's subsequent career" (Fletcher).

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So brainsickly of things. Go get some water,
And wash this filthy witness from your hand.
Why did you bring these daggers from the place?
They must lie there: go carry them, and smear
The sleepy grooms with blood.
Macbeth. I'll go no more:
I am afraid to think what I have done;
Look on 't again I dare not.
Lady Macbeth. Infirm of purpose!
Give me the daggers: the sleeping and the dead
Are but as pictures: 'tis the eye of childhood
That fears a painted devil. If he do bleed,
I'll gild the faces of the grooms withal,
For it must seem their guilt. [*Exit.* *Knocking within.*
Macbeth. Whence is that knocking?
How is 't with me, when every noise appals me?
What hands are here? ha! they pluck out mine eyes!
Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No; this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green one red.

Re-enter LADY MACBETH.

Lady Macbeth. My hands are of your colour, but I shame
To wear a heart so white. [*Knocking within.*] I hear a knocking
At the south entry: retire we to our chamber:
A little water clears us of this deed:
How easy is it then! Your constancy
Hath left you unattended. [*Knocking within.*] Hark! more knocking:
Get on your nightgown, lest occasion call us

62. **multitudinous seas incarnadine**, 'the many-waved sea encrimson.'
63. **one red**, uniformly red.
68. **constancy . . . unattended**, 'your firmness hath forsaken you.'

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And show us to be watchers: be not lost
So poorly in your thoughts.

Macbeth. To know my deed, 'twere best not know myself. [*Knocking within.*

Wake Duncan with thy knocking! I would thou couldst!
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *The same.*

Enter a Porter. *Knocking within.*

Porter. Here's a knocking indeed! If a man were porter of hell-gate, he should have old turning the key. [*Knocking within.*] Knock, knock, knock! Who's there, i' the name of Beelzebub? Here's a farmer, that hanged himself on th' expectation of plenty: come in time; have napkins enow about you; here you'll sweat for 't. [*Knocking within.*] Knock, knock! Who's there, in th' other devil's name? Faith, here's an equivocator, that could swear in both the scales against either scale; who committed treason enough for God's sake, yet could not equivocate to heaven: O, come in, equivocator. [*Knocking within.*] Knock, knock, knock! Who's there? Faith, here's an English tailor come hither, for stealing out of a French hose: come in, tailor; here you may roast your goose. [*Knocking within.*] Knock, knock; never at quiet! What are

73. **To know.** "If I must forever know my own deed" (Moberly). Scene iii.—Verbal notes on the 'Porter scene' are given on p. 183.

74. **Wake Duncan with thy knocking!** "Throughout this superb scene [i. e., scenes i. and ii.] there is a contrast between the emotional and imaginative Macbeth and his wife, who is not only far less emotional and imaginative, but who has all her powers under the control of an inflexible will. It must be strongly emphasized that this is a contrast of organization, and not of moral condition. At the end of the scene we cannot justly pronounce that Macbeth is remorseful, his wife incapable of remorse; judgment must be reserved until the end of the play."—*Helen Gray Cone.*

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you? But this place is too cold for hell. I'll devil-porter it no further: I had thought to have let in some of all professions, that go the primrose way to the everlasting bonfire. [*Knocking within.*] Anon, anon! I pray you remember the porter. [*Opens the gate.*

Enter MACDUFF *and* LENNOX.

Macduff. Was it so late, friend, ere you went to bed,
That you do lie so late?

Porter. Faith, sir, we were carousing till the second cock . . . .

Macduff. Is thy master stirring?

Enter MACBETH.

Our knocking has awaked him; here he comes.

Lennox. Good morrow, noble sir.

Macbeth. Good morrow, both.

Macduff. Is the king stirring, worthy thane?

Macbeth. Not yet.

Macduff. He did command me to call timely on him:
I had almost slipp'd the hour.

Macbeth. I'll bring you to him.

Macduff. I know this is a joyful trouble to you;
But yet 'tis one.

Macbeth. The labour we delight in physics pain.
This is the door.

Macduff. I'll make so bold to call,
For 'tis my limited service. [*Exit.*

Lennox. Goes the king hence to-day?

Macbeth. He does: he did appoint so.

Lennox. The night has been unruly: where we lay,
Our chimneys were blown down, and, as they say,
Lamentings heard i' the air, strange screams of death,

51. **timely**, betimes, early.
52. **slipp'd**, let slip.
55. **physics**, relieves.
57. **limited**, appointed.

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And prophesying with accents terrible
Of dire combustion and confused events
New hatch'd to the woeful time: the obscure bird
Clamour'd the livelong night: some say, the earth
Was feverous and did shake.

Macbeth. 'Twas a rough night.

Lennox. My young remembrance cannot parallel
A fellow to it.

Re-enter MACDUFF.

Macduff. O horror, horror, horror! Tongue nor heart
Cannot conceive nor name thee.

Macbeth. } What's the matter? 70
Lennox. }

Macduff. Confusion now hath made his masterpiece.
Most sacrilegious murder hath broke ope
The Lord's anointed temple, and stole thence
The life o' the building.

Macbeth. What is 't you say? the life?

Lennox. Mean you his majesty?

Macduff. Approach the chamber, and destroy your sight
With a new Gorgon: do not bid me speak;
See, and then speak yourselves.

[*Exeunt* MACBETH *and* LENNOX.

Awake, awake!
Ring the alarum-bell. Murder and treason!
Banquo and Donalbain! Malcolm! awake! 80
Shake off this downy sleep, death's counterfeit,
And look on death itself! up, up, and see
The great doom's image! Malcolm! Banquo!
As from your graves rise up, and walk like sprites,
To countenance this horror. Ring the bell. [*Bell rings.*

63. **combustion**, uproar, tumult, *i. e.*, social confusion.

64. **the obscure bird**, the owl, which loves the darkness.

85. **countenance**, give a suitable accompaniment to. As at the final judgment the dead are to rise from their graves, so this image of the great doom ought to be accompanied by spirits.

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Enter LADY MACBETH.

Lady Macbeth. What 's the business,
That such a hideous trumpet calls to parley
The sleepers of the house? speak, speak!
Macduff. O gentle lady,
'Tis not for you to hear what I can speak:
The repetition, in a woman's ear,
Would murder as it fell.

Enter BANQUO.

O Banquo, Banquo!
Our royal master 's murder'd.
Lady Macbeth. Woe, alas!
What, in our house?
Banquo. Too cruel any where.
Dear Duff, I prithee, contradict thyself,
And say it is not so.

Re-enter MACBETH *and* LENNOX, *with* ROSS.

Macbeth. Had I but died an hour before this chance,
I had lived a blessed time; for from this instant
There's nothing serious in mortality:
All is but toys: renown and grace is dead;
The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees
Is left this vault to brag of.

Enter MALCOLM *and* DONALBAIN.

Donalbain. What is amiss?
Macbeth. You are, and do not know 't:
The spring, the head, the fountain of your blood
Is stopp'd; the very source of it is stopp'd.
Macduff. Your royal father's murder'd.
Malcolm. O, by whom?

87. **parley**, conference.
98. **mortality**, this mortal life.
100. **The wine of life.** Cf. Tennyson's phrase in *Ulysses*, 'I have drunk Life to the lees.'

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Lennox. Those of his chamber, as it seem'd, had done 't:
Their hands and faces were all badged with blood;
So were their daggers, which unwiped we found
Upon their pillows:
They stared, and were distracted; no man's life
Was to be trusted with them.

Macbeth. O, yet I do repent me of my fury,
That I did kill them.

Macduff. Wherefore did you so?

Macbeth. Who can be wise, amazed, temperate and furious,
Loyal and neutral, in a moment? No man:
The expedition of my violent love
Outrun the pauser reason. Here lay Duncan,
His silver skin laced with his golden blood,
And his gash'd stabs look'd like a breach in nature
For ruin's wasteful entrance: there, the murderers,
Steep'd in the colours of their trade, their daggers
Unmannerly breech'd with gore: who could refrain,
That had a heart to love, and in that heart
Courage to make 's love known?

Lady Macbeth. Help me hence, oh!

107. **badged**, smeared, wearing 'murder's crimson badge.'
116. **expedition**, haste.
117. **Outrun**, outran.
118. **silver skin laced.** "It was usual to lace cloth of silver with gold."
122. **breech'd with gore.** Possibly sheathed or covered with blood as with breeches, or having the very hilt, or breech, covered with blood. For various conjectures, see Furness.

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114. Note the difference in the literary quality and the persuasive power of lines 96–100 and lines 114–124.

124. **Help me hence.** "A white flame of resolution glows through her delicate organization, like light through an alabaster lamp. . . . For dreadful deeds anticipated and resolved upon she has strength; but the surprise of a novel horror on which she had not counted deprives her suddenly of consciousness. When Macbeth announces his butchery of Duncan's grooms, the lady swoons—not in feigning

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Macduff. Look to the lady.

Malcolm. [*Aside to* DONALBAIN.] Why do we hold our tongues,
That most may claim this argument for ours?

Donalbain. [*Aside to* MALCOLM.] What should be spoken here, where our fate,
Hid in an auger-hole, may rush, and seize us?
Let's away;
Our tears are not yet brew'd.

Malcolm. [*Aside to* DONALBAIN.] Nor our strong sorrow
Upon the foot of motion.

Banquo. Look to the lady:
[LADY MACBETH *is carried out.*
And when we have our naked frailties hid,
That suffer in exposure, let us meet,
And question this most bloody piece of work,
To know it further. Fears and scruples shake us:
In the great hand of God I stand, and thence
Against the undivulged pretence I fight
Of treasonous malice.

Macduff. And so do I.

All. So all.

126. **That most may claim this argument for ours**, *i. e.*, who have the greatest interest in the theme or matter.

131. **foot of motion.** Either "Our strong sorrow has not yet begun to move" or "As yet we can only feel grief; we have not reached the point where attempt at revenge can be set on foot."

137. **pretence**, intention, design.

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but in fact—and is borne away insensible."—*Dowden.* For further comment, see Notes, p. 184.

"Whether Lady Macbeth's fainting is genuine or pretended, it serves the double dramatic purpose of cutting short the inquiry about the killing of the chamberlains—into which the dramatist does not wish to go farther at present—and of giving opportunity by the confusion attending it, for the 'asides' of Malcolm and Donalbain."—*Manly.*

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Macbeth. Let's briefly put on manly readiness,
And meet i' the hall together.
All. Well contented.
[*Exeunt all but* MALCOLM *and* DONALBAIN.
Malcolm. What will you do? Let's not consort with them:
To show an unfelt sorrow is an office
Which the false man does easy. I'll to England.
Donalbain. To Ireland, I; our separated fortune
Shall keep us both safer: where we are
There's daggers in men's smiles: the near in blood,
The nearer bloody.
Malcolm. This murderous shaft that's shot
Hath not yet lighted, and our safest way
Is to avoid the aim. Therefore to horse;
And let us not be dainty of leave-taking,
But shift away: there's warrant in that theft
Which steals itself when there's no mercy left. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. *Outside* MACBETH'S *castle.*

Enter ROSS *with an* Old Man.

Old Man. Threescore and ten I can remember well:
Within the volume of which time I have seen
Hours dreadful and things strange, but this sore night
Hath trifled former knowings.
Ross. Ah, good father,
Thou seest, the heavens, as troubled with man's act,
Threaten his bloody stage: by the clock 'tis day,

139. **manly readiness**, complete clothing and armour such as befits men, in opposition to the preceding 'naked frailties' (Delius).
143. **easy**, easily.
146. **near**, nearer.
151. **shift away**, steal away.
Scene iv.—4. **trifled former knowings**, *i. e.*, made former experiences trifling in comparison.
6. **his bloody stage**, *i. e.*, the earth, the scene of man's cruelties.

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And yet dark night strangles the travelling lamp:
Is 't night's predominance, or the day's shame,
That darkness does the face of earth entomb,
When living light should kiss it?
Old Man. 'Tis unnatural,
Even like the deed that's done. On Tuesday last
A falcon towering in her pride of place
Was by a mousing owl hawk'd at and kill'd.
Ross. And Duncan's horses—a thing most strange and certain—
Beauteous and swift, the minions of their race,
Turn'd wild in nature, broke their stalls, flung out,
Contending 'gainst obedience, as they would make
War with mankind.
Old Man. 'Tis said they eat each other.
Ross. They did so, to the amazement of mine eyes,
That look'd upon 't.

Enter MACDUFF.

Here comes the good Macduff.
How goes the world, sir, now?
Macduff. Why, see you not?
Ross. Is 't known who did this more than bloody deed?
Macduff. Those that Macbeth hath slain.
Ross. Alas, the day!
What good could they pretend?
Macduff. They were suborn'd:
Malcolm and Donalbain, the king's two sons,
Are stol'n away and fled, which puts upon them
Suspicion of the deed.

7. **the travelling lamp**, the sun.
8. **predominance**, influence,—an astrological term.
12. **towering**, soaring. **place**, the highest point attained, the falcon's 'pitch,' whence it drops upon its prey.
15. **minions**, Cf. I. ii. 19.
24. **good**, profit to themselves. **pretend**, intend. **suborn'd**, hired.

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Ross. 'Gainst nature still:
Thriftless ambition, that wilt ravin up
Thine own life's means! Then 'tis most like
The sovereignty will fall upon Macbeth.
Macduff. He is already named, and gone to Scone
To be invested.
Ross. Where is Duncan's body?
Macduff. Carried to Colme-kill,
The sacred storehouse of his predecessors
And guardian of their bones.
Ross. Will you to Scone?
Macduff. No, cousin, I'll to Fife.
Ross. Well, I will thither.
Macduff. Well, may you see things well done there: adieu!
Lest our old robes sit easier than our new!
Ross. Farewell, father.
Old Man. God's benison go with you, and with those
That would make good of bad and friends of foes! [*Exeunt.*

28. **ravin up**, devour ravenously.
29. **like**, likely.
34. **storehouse**, place of burial.

"This scene gives relief and perspective to the action by presenting it from an outside point of view, that of the Scottish subject." —*Chambers.*

"This scene . . . serves as a transition to the events which follow . . . and it prepares us to find Macbeth occupying the throne. The sole particulars in which it advances the action are that last mentioned, and Macduff's refusal to go to Scone, which, although it seems of no great significance at the moment, nevertheless causes his later peremptory refusal to attend Macbeth to come upon us not with the shock of complete surprise, but as a thing that might have been expected. Those of us who know the play well are apt to read every event in the light of the whole play, but obviously the events of a play have at the moment of their occurrence only the significance which they display upon first seeing them presented; later a new significance appears as we see their results."—*Manly.*

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ACT THIRD.

SCENE I. *Forres. The palace.*

Enter BANQUO.

Banquo. Thou hast it now: king, Cawdor, Glamis, all,
As the weird women promised, and I fear
Thou play'dst most foully for 't: yet it was said
It should not stand in thy posterity,
But that myself should be the root and father
Of many kings. If there come truth from them—
As upon thee, Macbeth, their speeches shine—
Why, by the verities on thee made good,
May they not be my oracles as well
And set me up in hope? But hush, no more. 10

7. **shine**, 'appear with all the lustre of conspicuous truth' (Johnson), *i. e.*, 'are brilliantly fulfilled.'

Scene i.—"How long a time has elapsed since the death of Duncan is dramatically a matter of no consequence; the important fact—the only fact which the dramatist attempts to impress upon us—is that Banquo's suspicions of Macbeth and Macbeth's fears of Banquo have ripened."—*Manly.*

3. **play'dst most foully for 't.** "In the light of Banquo's opening soliloquy, comment upon his vow to Macbeth of unalterable fealty, lines 16, 17."—*Pattee.*

9. **my oracles as well.** "Show that Banquo was impressed by the prophecy of the witches almost as much as was Macbeth."—*Pattee.*

10. **But hush, no more.** Cf. II. i. 8. "These words are in perfect moral keeping with Banquo's previous resolute fightings against evil suggestions" (Clarke). "Does he check himself, because he would fight against temptation? or because he heard the trumpet and knew Macbeth and suite were near?"—*Sprague.*

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Sennet sounded. Enter MACBETH, *as king;* LADY MACBETH, *as queen;* LENNOX, ROSS, Lords, Ladies, *and* Attendants.

Macbeth. Here's our chief guest.

Lady Macbeth. If he had been forgotten,
It had been as a gap in our great feast,
And all-thing unbecoming.

Macbeth. To-night we hold a solemn supper, sir,
And I'll request your presence.

Banquo. Let your highness
Command upon me, to the which my duties
Are with a most indissoluble tie
For ever knit.

Macbeth. Ride you this afternoon?

Banquo. Ay, my good lord. 20

Macbeth. We should have else desired your good advice,
Which still hath been both grave and prosperous,
In this day's council; but we'll take to-morrow.
Is 't far you ride?

Banquo. As far, my lord, as will fill up the time
'Twixt this and supper: go not my horse the better,
I must become a borrower of the night
For a dark hour or twain.

13. **all-thing**, every way. Cf. *some*thing, *no*thing.

14. **solemn**, ceremonious, formal, official. A solemn supper in Shakspere's time was a feast or banquet given to *solemnize* any event, *e. g.*, a birth, a wedding, a coronation.

16. **command upon**, 'put your commands upon.'

22. **still**, always. **grave**, weighty. **prosperous**, *i. e.*, causing prosperity.

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17. **indissoluble tie.** "And Banquo can declare firm, unalterable fealty to the very man whom to himself he has just accused, almost in so many words, of attaining the throne by the assassination of his royal master! Such a declaration could only have been made by one whose own heart is closely allied to evil."—*Flathe.* See references to Banquo, pp. 72, 88, 89.

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Macbeth. Fail not our feast.

Banquo. My lord, I will not.

Macbeth. We hear our bloody cousins are bestow'd
In England and in Ireland, not confessing
Their cruel parricide, filling their hearers
With strange invention: but of that to-morrow,
When therewithal we shall have cause of state
Craving us jointly. Hie you to horse: adieu,
Till you return at night. Goes Fleance with you?

Banquo. Ay, my good lord: our time does call upon 's.

Macbeth. I wish your horses swift and sure of foot,
And so I do commend you to their backs.
Farewell. [*Exit* BANQUO.
Let every man be master of his time
Till seven at night; to make society
The sweeter welcome, we will keep ourself
Till supper-time alone: while then, God be with you!
[*Exeunt all but* MACBETH *and an* Attendant.
Sirrah, a word with you: attend those men
Our pleasure?

Attendant. They are, my lord, without the palace-gate.

Macbeth. Bring them before us. [*Exit* Attendant.
To be thus is nothing;
But to be safely thus: our fears in Banquo
Stick deep; and in his royalty of nature

34. **When therewithal,** *i. e.*, when therewith we shall have affairs of state requiring our joint consideration.

37. **our time does call upon 's,** *i. e.*, 'It is high time we should be setting out.'

44. **while then,** till then.

49. **But,** 'unless' (Staunton). 'But to be safely thus (is something)' (Abbott).

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37. "If Banquo, in line 37, should say 'Nay' instead of 'Aye,' how would it affect his safety for the night? Why?"—*Sherman.*

50. **in his royalty of nature,** *etc.*, in the royalty of his nature (in the kingliness, that is, or the kinglike temper of his nature) *reigns*

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Reigns that which would be fear'd: 'tis much he dares,
And, to that dauntless temper of his mind,
He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valour
To act in safety. There is none but he
Whose being I do fear: and under him
My Genius is rebuked, as it is said
Mark Antony's was by Cæsar. He chid the sisters,
When first they put the name of king upon me,
And bade them speak to him; then prophet-like
They hail'd him father to a line of kings:
Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown
And put a barren sceptre in my gripe,
Thence to be wrench'd with an unlineal hand,
No son of mine succeeding. If 't be so,
For Banquo's issue have I filed my mind;
For them the gracious Duncan have I murder'd;
Put rancours in the vessel of my peace
Only for them, and mine eternal jewel
Given to the common enemy of man,
To make them kings, the seed of Banquo kings!
Rather than so, come, fate, into the list,
And champion me to the utterance! Who 's there?

52. **to**, in addition to.
65. **filed**, defiled.
68. **mine eternal jewel**, my immortal soul.
71. **the list**, the lists, *i. e.*, the space marked out for combat.
72. **champion me**, fight with me. **to the utterance**, a French phrase, *à l'outrance*, to the uttermost, *i. e.*, to the death. See description of such combat in *Ivanhoe*.

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that which is to be feared. Macbeth evidently does not think of Banquo as a scrupulously moral man closing his ears ('But hush, no more') to the temptations of the Weird Sisters, 'the instruments of darkness.' On the contrary, Macbeth's fears in Banquo 'stick deep.'

72. **Who's there?** Not professional assassins, according to Clark and Wright, but soldiers of ruined fortune. "The fact that Mac-

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Re-enter Attendant, *with two* Murderers.

Now go to the door, and stay there till we call.
[*Exit* Attendant.
Was it not yesterday we spoke together?
First Murderer. It was, so please your highness.
Macbeth. Well then, now
Have you consider'd of my speeches? Know
That it was he in the times past which held you
So under fortune, which you thought had been
Our innocent self: this I made good to you
In our last conference; pass'd in probation with you,
How you were borne in hand, how cross'd, the instruments,
Who wrought with them, and all things else that might
To half a soul and to a notion crazed
Say 'Thus did Banquo.'
First Murderer. You made it known to us.
Macbeth. I did so; and went further, which is now
Our point of second meeting. Do you find
Your patience so predominant in your nature,
That you can let this go? Are you so gospell'd,
To pray for this good man and for his issue,
Whose heavy hand hath bow'd you to the grave
And beggar'd yours forever?

80. **pass'd in probation.** 'Spent proving to you' (Rolfe). 'I proved to you in detail' (Clarendon).

81. **borne in hand,** kept up by false hopes.

83. **to a notion crazed,** 'even to the most feeble apprehension.'

88. **so gospell'd,** *i. e.*, so imbued with the spirit of the Gospel, which bids us love our enemies.

89. **To pray,** as to pray.

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beth was obliged to use skillfully devised argument to win them, proves what?"—*Pattee.*

"Describe the artifices by which Macbeth seeks to instil into the murderers a feeling of personal vengeance against his victim."—*S. Thurber.*

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First Murderer. We are men, my liege.

Macbeth. Ay, in the catalogue ye go for men;
As hounds and greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels, curs,
Shoughs, water-rugs and demi-wolves, are clept
All by the name of dogs: the valued file
Distinguishes the swift, the slow, the subtle,
The housekeeper, the hunter, every one
According to the gift which bounteous nature
Hath in him closed, whereby he does receive
Particular addition, from the bill
That writes them all alike: and so of men.
Now if you have a station in the file,
Not i' the worst rank of manhood, say it,
And I will put that business in your bosoms
Whose execution takes your enemy off,
Grapples you to the heart and love of us,
Who wear our health but sickly in his life,
Which in his death were perfect.

Second Murderer. I am one, my liege,
Whom the vile blows and buffets of the world
Have so incensed that I am reckless what
I do to spite the world.

First Murderer. And I another
So weary with disasters, tugg'd with fortune,

94. **clept**, called.

95. **the valued file**, *i. e.*, the file or list of the value and qualities of each in distinction from the catalogue, or bill, 'that writes them all alike.'

99. **closed**, enclosed.

100. **from**, differently from.

112. **tugg'd with fortune**, hauled about by fortune.

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93. **As hounds.** If only the reader realizes adequately that one variety of dog differs from another, it is not at all essential,—in order to understand this simile,—to go into the natural history of the various kinds of dog here enumerated, however valuable such information may be on other grounds.

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That I would set my life on any chance,
To mend it or be rid on 't.
Macbeth. Both of you
Know Banquo was your enemy.
Both Murderers. True, my lord.
Macbeth. So is he mine, and in such bloody distance
That every minute of his being thrusts
Against my near'st of life: and though I could
With barefaced power sweep him from my sight
And bid my will avouch it, yet I must not,
For certain friends that are both his and mine,
Whose loves I may not drop, but wail his fall
Who I myself struck down: and thence it is
That I to your assistance do make love,
Masking the business from the common eye
For sundry weighty reasons.
Second Murderer. We shall, my lord,
Perform what you command us.
First Murderer. Though our lives—
Macbeth. Your spirits shine through you. Within this hour at most
I will advise you where to plant yourselves,
Acquaint you with the perfect spy o' the time,
The moment on 't; for 't must be done to-night,
And something from the palace; always thought

116. **distance**, "a technical term in fencing for the space kept between two antagonists, and *such bloody distance* means at such close and murderous quarters" (Deighton). Note the fencing term *thrusts* in the next line.

118. **my near'st of life**, my inmost life, most vital parts.

120. **avouch it**, *i. e.*, 'be accepted as the justification of the deed' (Clarendon).

121. **For**, on account of.

130. **spy o' the time.** 'The precise time when you may espy him coming.' See Furness, however, for many interpretations.

132. **something from**, somewhat from, or some distance from. **always thought**, 'it being always borne in mind' (Abbott).

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That I require a clearness: and with him—
To leave no rubs nor botches in the work—
Fleance his son, that keeps him company,
Whose absence is no less material to me
Than is his father's, must embrace the fate
Of that dark hour. Resolve yourselves apart:
I 'll come to you anon.

Both Murderers. We are resolved, my lord.

Macbeth. I 'll call upon you straight: abide within. 140
[*Exeunt* Murderers.

It is concluded: Banquo, thy soul's flight,
If it find heaven, must find it out to-night. [*Exit.*

Scene II. *The palace.*

Enter Lady Macbeth *and a* Servant.

Lady Macbeth. Is Banquo gone from court?

Servant. Ay, madam, but returns again to-night.

Lady Macbeth. Say to the king, I would attend his leisure
For a few words.

Servant. Madam, I will. [*Exit.*

Lady Macbeth. Nought 's had, all 's spent,
Where our desire is got without content:
'Tis safer to be that which we destroy
Than by destruction dwell in doubtful joy.

134. **rubs**, hindrances, impediments.
Scene ii.—3. **attend**, await.
5. **content**, satisfaction.

140. "Still another eloquent instant [in Booth's rendering] was the pause after 'Abide within, I'll call upon you straight'—a pause in which repentance and helpless human agony were seen, for one heart-rending moment, in conflict with the demon that impels his victim to yet deeper deeps of crime and misery."—*William Winter.*

Scene ii.—4–7. "This brief soliloquy allows us to see the deep-seated misery of the murderess, the profound melancholy in which she is secretly steeped; while, on the instant that she sees her hus-

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Enter MACBETH.

How now, my lord! why do you keep alone,
Of sorriest fancies your companions making;
Using those thoughts which should indeed have died

9. **sorriest**, saddest, most melancholy.
10. **Using**, entertaining, cherishing.

---

band, she can rally her forces, assume exterior fortitude, and resume her accustomed hardness of manner, with which to stimulate him by remonstrance almost amounting to reproach."—*Clarke.*

"This profound sigh from the depths of a deeply-wounded soul is the key to all that we afterwards hear and learn of Lady Macbeth. A complaint has been urged that between her first and her last appearance the connecting link, the bridge, is wanting; *here*, and *only* here, is this bridge supplied. Here, for an instant, we overhear her, and from her own lips learn what her pride, her love for Macbeth even, will not suffer to be uttered aloud; it is what she convulsively locks in her breast, and what at last breaks her heart. This short monologue is the sole preparation for the sleep-walking and the death of the woman; her death would be unintelligible did we not here see the beginning of the end."—*Gericke.*

"From the moment of her sin, remorse begins to lay hold upon Lady Macbeth. She conceals it in Macbeth's presence, thinking to strengthen him, as of old; but the two lives are insensibly drifting asunder. Macbeth addresses her in terms of grim love, but he no longer takes her counsel on his schemes, and only half imparts them to her, even at the last moment. As for Macbeth himself, directly there is nothing to be done, he becomes morbid, brooding over his crimes past and future, and playing about them with lurid words."—*Chambers.*

"It has become customary of late among Lady Macbeth's apologists to speak of her as suffering from remorse, but it is not easy to find the justification of such a view. From her lips, as from her husband's, no word of contrition for the past ever falls. She is simply the prey of her delicate sensibilities as Macbeth of his flushed imagination. The 'eternal feminine' in her nature rises in triumphant mutiny against the will that for a space had wrestled it down."—*Boas.*

"It is the queen, and not her husband, who is slain by conscience."—*Dowden.*

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With them they think on? Things without all remedy
Should be without regard: what 's done is done.
Macbeth. We have scotch'd the snake, not kill'd it:
She 'll close and be herself, whilst our poor malice
Remains in danger of her former tooth.
But let the frame of things disjoint, both the worlds suffer,
Ere we will eat our meal in fear, and sleep
In the affliction of these terrible dreams
That shake us nightly: better be with the dead,
Whom we, to gain our peace, have sent to peace,
Than on the torture of the mind to lie
In restless ecstasy. Duncan is in his grave;
After life's fitful fever he sleeps well;
Treason has done his worst: nor steel, nor poison,
Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing,
Can touch him further.
Lady Macbeth. Come on;
Gentle my lord, sleek o'er your rugged looks;
Be bright and jovial among your guests to-night.
Macbeth. So shall I, love; and so, I pray, be you:

11. **without all**, without any or beyond all.
13. **scotch'd**, cut with shallow incisions, gashed.
14. **She 'll close**, *i. e.*, the wounds will heal. **poor**, feeble.
16. **the frame of things disjoint**, 'the (orderly) universe fall to pieces.' **both the worlds suffer**, heaven and earth perish.
21. **on**. The 'torture of the mind' is compared to a rack on which the mind lies in ecstasy, *i. e.*, beside itself with the frenzy of pain.
23. **fitful**, 'full of paroxyms' (Schmidt), 'intermittent' (Clarendon).
25. "**Malice domestic**, such as the treason of Macdonwald; **foreign levy**, such as the invasion of Sweno" (Clarendon).
27. **sleek o'er**, smooth.

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18. **these terrible dreams.** "Those who have seen Miss Helen Faucit play Lady Macbeth will remember how she shuddered at the mention of the 'terrible dreams,' with which she too was shaken. The sleep-walking scene was doubtless in the poet's mind already." —*Clarendon.*

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Let your remembrance apply to Banquo;
Present him eminence, both with eye and tongue:
Unsafe the while, that we
Must lave our honours in these flattering streams,
And make our faces visards to our hearts,
Disguising what they are.
Lady Macbeth. You must leave this.
Macbeth. O, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife!
Thou know'st that Banquo, and his Fleance, lives.
Lady Macbeth. But in them nature's copy 's not eterne.
Macbeth. There's comfort yet; they are assailable;
Then be thou jocund: ere the bat hath flown
His cloister'd flight; ere to black Hecate's summons
The shard-borne beetle with his drowsy hums
Hath rung night's yawning peal, there shall be done
A deed of dreadful note.
Lady Macbeth. What 's to be done?
Macbeth. Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck,
Till thou applaud the deed. Come, seeling night,

30. **apply to**, devote itself to.

31. **Present him eminence**, offer him distinction, *i. e.*, show him the highest honor.

32. An imperfect line. As it stands **that we** may mean *in that we* or **the while that we** may mean *so long as we.*

33. **lave**, *i. e.*, keep our honor clear and unsullied by streams of flattery.

35. **leave**, leave off. **this**, *i. e.*, such tormenting thoughts.

38. **nature's copy 's not eterne**,—a legal metaphor. Copy is 'copy-hold,' a tenure which is not permanent. Or, possibly, nature's copy is 'the human form divine.'

43. **yawning peal**, a peal which lulls to sleep.

44. **dreadful note**, dreadful notoriety. '*Note* combines the senses of *eminence* and *infamy.*'

46. **seeling**, blinding (a term of falconry). The eyelids of hawks were sewn together with fine silk while they were 'in training.'

---

38. **nature's copy 's not eterne.** Is this 'a note of accord with his design' or 'but a weary commonplace of consolation'? If the former, would Macbeth have taken her more fully into his confidence (Thou marvell'st at my words)?

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Scarf up the tender eye of pitiful day,
And with thy bloody and invisible hand
Cancel and tear to pieces that great bond
Which keeps me pale! Light thickens, and the crow
Makes wing to the rooky wood:
Good things of day begin to droop and drowse,
Whiles night's black agents to their preys do rouse.
Thou marvell'st at my words: but hold thee still;
Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill:
So, prithee, go with me. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *A park near the palace.*

Enter three Murderers.

First Murderer. But who did bid thee join with us?
Third Murderer. Macbeth.
Second Murderer. He needs not our mistrust; since he delivers
Our offices, and what we have to do,
To the direction just.
First Murderer. Then stand with us.
The west yet glimmers with some streaks of day:
Now spurs the lated traveller apace

47. **Scarf up**, blindfold.

49. **that great bond**, *i. e.*, Banquo's life (cf. *Richard III*, IV. iv. 77, Cancel his bond of life, dear God, I pray), or, perhaps, "the bond between destiny and the house of Banquo, made known in the prophecy of the weird sisters."

51. **rooky**, gloomy. Or rook-haunted.

Scene iii.—3. **offices**, duty, employment.

4. **To**, according to. **just**, exactly.

6. **lated**, belated. **apace**, quickly.

---

52. **Good things of day begin to droop and drowse**—a line "which we may repeat to ourselves as a motto of the entire tragedy."—*Dowden.*

55. **Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill.** Cf. the doctrine of Machiavelli, that the only safe blows are those too heavy to be avenged.

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To gain the timely inn, and near approaches
The subject of our watch.

Third Murderer. Hark! I hear horses.

Banquo. [*Within.*] Give us a light there, ho!

Second Murderer. Then 'tis he: the rest
That are within the note of expectation
Already are i' the court.

First Murderer. His horses go about.

Third Murderer. Almost a mile: but he does usually—
So all men do—from hence to the palace gate
Make it their walk.

Second Murderer. A light, a light!

Enter BANQUO, *and* FLEANCE *with a torch.*

Third Murderer. 'Tis he.

First Murderer. Stand to 't.

Banquo. It will be rain to-night.

First Murderer. Let it come down.

[*They set upon* BANQUO.

Banquo. O, treachery! Fly, good Fleance, fly, fly, fly!
Thou mayst revenge. O slave!

[*Dies.* FLEANCE *escapes.*

Third Murderer. Who did strike out the light?

First Murderer. Was 't not the way?

Third Murderer. There 's but one down; the son is fled.

7. **the timely inn**, the opportune inn.
10. **the note of expectation**, the list of expected guests.

---

19. **the son is fled.** "The rise and fall of Macbeth . . . constitute a perfect arch, with a turning-point in the centre. Macbeth's series of successes is unbroken till it ends in the murder of Banquo; his series of failures is unbroken from its commencement in the escape of Fleance. Success thus constituting the first half and failure the second half of the play, the transition from the one to the other, is the expedition against Banquo and Fleance, in which success and failure are mingled: and this expedition, the keystone to the arch, is found to occupy the exact middle of the middle Act."—*Moulton.*

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Second Murderer. We have lost
Best half of our affair.

First Murderer. Well, let's away and say how much is done. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. *Hall in the palace.*

A banquet prepared. Enter MACBETH, LADY MACBETH, ROSS, LENNOX, Lords, *and* Attendants.

Macbeth. You know your own degrees; sit down: at first
And last a hearty welcome.

Lords. Thanks to your majesty.

Macbeth. Ourself will mingle with society
And play the humble host.
Our hostess keeps her state, but in best time
We will require her welcome.

Lady Macbeth. Pronounce it for me, sir, to all our friends,
For my heart speaks they are welcome.

Enter First Murderer *to the door.*

Macbeth. See, they encounter thee with their hearts' thanks.
Both sides are even: here I 'll sit i' the midst:
Be large in mirth; anon we 'll drink a measure
The table round. [*Approaching the door.*] There 's blood upon thy face.

Murderer. 'Tis Banquo's then.

Macbeth. 'Tis better thee without than he within.
Is he dispatch'd?

Scene iv.—1. **degrees**, degrees of rank. At the banquet table they would properly seat themselves in the order of their rank. **at first And last**, 'once for all.' Or, perhaps, 'to first and last,' 'to one and all.'

5. **keeps her state**, *i. e.*, remains seated in her chair of state.

6. **require**, request (not in the sense of demand).

14. **thee without**. 'It is better outside thee than inside him' (Clarendon). See Furness, however.

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Murderer. My lord, his throat is cut; that I did for him.

Macbeth. Thou are the best o' cut-throats: yet he 's good
That did the like for Fleance: if thou didst it,
Thou art the nonpareil.

Murderer. Most royal sir,
Fleance is 'scaped.

Macbeth. [*Aside.*] Then comes my fit again: I had else been perfect,
Whole as the marble, founded as the rock,
As broad and general as the casing air:
But now I am cabin'd, cribb'd, confined, bound in
To saucy doubts and fears.—But Banquo's safe?

Murderer. Ay, my good lord: safe in a ditch he bides,
With twenty trenched gashes on his head;
The least a death to nature.

Macbeth. Thanks for that.
[*Aside.*] There the grown serpent lies; the worm that 's fled
Hath nature that in time will venom breed,
No teeth for the present. Get thee gone: to-morrow
We 'll hear ourselves again. [*Exit* Murderer.

Lady Macbeth. My royal lord,
You do not give the cheer: the feast is sold
That is not often vouch'd, while 'tis a-making,
'Tis given with welcome: to feed were best at home;
From thence the sauce to meat is ceremony;
Meeting were bare without it.

Macbeth. Sweet remembrancer!

19. **the nonpareil**, the unequaled one.
21. **my fit**, *i. e.*, his 'ague fit' of fear and suspicion. **perfect**, *i. e.*, perfect in security.
23. **casing**, encompassing, all-surrounding.
29. **worm**, a small serpent.
32. **hear ourselves**, talk with each other.
33. **the cheer**, the usual welcome.

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Now good digestion wait on appetite,
And health on both!

Lennox. May 't please your highness sit.

[*The Ghost of* BANQUO *enters, and sits in* MACBETH'S *place.*

Macbeth. Here had we now our country's honour roof'd, 40
Were the graced person of our Banquo present;
Who may I rather challenge for unkindness
Than pity for mischance!

Ross. His absence, sir,
Lays blame upon his promise. Please 't your highness
To grace us with your royal company.

Macbeth. The table 's full.

Lennox. Here is a place reserved, sir.

Macbeth. Where?

Lennox. Here, my good lord. What is 't that moves your highness?

Macbeth. Which of you have done this?

Lords. What, my good lord?

Macbeth. Thou canst not say I did it: never shake 50
Thy gory locks at me.

40. **roof'd**, *i. e.*, gathered under one roof.
41. **graced**, full of grace.

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39. "Mrs. Siddons, I believe, had an idea that Lady Macbeth beheld the spectre of Banquo in the supper scene, and that her self-control and presence of mind enabled her to surmount her consciousness of the ghastly presence. This would be superhuman, and I do not see that either the character or the text bear out this supposition."—*Mrs. Jameson.*

For discussions as to whether in a representation upon the stage the ghost should 'visibly appear' to the audience, see Furness.

45. "As Ross speaks, Macbeth turns to his seat and finds it full. He starts back, and looks round, to the surprise of the guests, who only see an empty chair. At first (line 49) he thinks it is an unseemly practical joke; then the truth breaks upon him, and in a low, broken voice he addresses the ghost (line 50)."—*Chambers.*

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Ross. Gentlemen, rise; his highness is not well.

Lady Macbeth. Sit, worthy friends: my lord is often thus,
And hath been from his youth: pray you, keep seat;
The fit is momentary; upon a thought
He will again be well: if much you note him,
You shall offend him and extend his passion:
Feed, and regard him not. Are you a man?

Macbeth. Ay, and a bold one, that dare look on that
Which might appal the devil.

Lady Macbeth. O proper stuff! 60
This is the very painting of your fear:
This is the air-drawn dagger which, you said,
Led you to Duncan. O, these flaws and starts,
Impostors to true fear, would well become
A woman's story at a winter's fire,
Authorized by her grandam. Shame itself!
Why do you make such faces? When all 's done.
You look but on a stool.

Macbeth. Prithee, see there! behold! look! lo! how say you?
Why, what care I? If thou canst nod, speak too. 70
If charnel-houses and our grave must send
Those that we bury back, our monuments
Shall be the maws of kites. [*Exit* Ghost.

Lady Macbeth. What, quite unmann'd in folly?

55. **upon a thought**, in a moment.
57. **shall**, are sure to. **extend his passion**, prolong his fit.
63. **flaws**, gusts of emotion, storms of passion.
64. **Impostors to**, impostors compared to.
66. **Authorized by**, given on the authority of.

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58. **Are you a man?** "This and Lady Macbeth's three following speeches are hurried under-breath expostulations with her husband; but his speeches in reply are spoken only with the restraint of terror. At line 83 she addresses him in her society way, and he so answers." —*White.*

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Macbeth. If I stand here, I saw him.
Lady Macbeth. Fie, for shame!
Macbeth. Blood hath been shed ere now, i' the olden time,
Ere humane statute purged the gentle weal;
Ay, and since too, murders have been perform'd
Too terrible for the ear: the time has been,
That, when the brains were out, the man would die,
And there an end; but now they rise again,
With twenty mortal murders on their crowns,
And push us from our stools: this is more strange
Than such a murder is.
Lady Macbeth. My worthy lord,
Your noble friends do lack you.
Macbeth. I do forget.
Do not muse at me, my most worthy friends;
I have a strange infirmity, which is nothing
To those that know me. Come, love and health to all;
Then I 'll sit down. Give me some wine, fill full.
I drink to the general joy o' the whole table,
And to our dear friend Banquo, whom we miss;
Would he were here! to all and him we thirst,
And all to all.
Lords. Our duties, and the pledge.

Re-enter Ghost.

Macbeth. Avaunt! and quit my sight! let the earth hide thee!
Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold;

76. **humane.** Either 'humane' or 'human.' The two meanings are not distinguished in Shakspere by the spelling. **the gentle weal,** "Ere humane statute purged the common weal and made it gentle." Cf. I. vi. 3.
81. **mortal murders,** deadly wounds, each 'a death to nature.'
85. **muse,** wonder.
91. **thirst,** desire to drink.
92. **And all to all,** *i. e.*, all good wishes to all.

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Thou hast no speculation in those eyes
Which thou dost glare with.
Lady Macbeth. Think of this, good peers,
But as a thing of custom: 'tis no other;
Only it spoils the pleasure of the time.
Macbeth. What man dare, I dare:
Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear,
The arm'd rhinoceros, or the Hyrcan tiger;
Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves
Shall never tremble: or be alive again,
And dare me to the desert with thy sword;
If trembling I inhabit then, protest me
The baby of a girl. Hence, horrible shadow!
Unreal mockery, hence! [*Exit* Ghost.
Why, so: being gone,
I am a man again. Pray you, sit still.
Lady Macbeth. You have displaced the mirth, broke the good meeting,
With most admired disorder.
Macbeth. Can such things be,
And overcome us like a summer's cloud,
Without our special wonder? You make me strange
Even to the disposition that I owe,
When now I think you can behold such sights,
And keep the natural ruby of your cheeks,
When mine is blanch'd with fear.

95. **speculation**, intelligence, power of vision, 'light of intellect.'

105. **If trembling I inhabit then.** 'If, when dared to the desert, I through fear remain at home.' See Furness, however.

106. **The baby of a girl**, a girl's doll. Or, perhaps, 'the feeble child of an immature mother.'

109. **displaced**, deranged or banished.

110. **admired**, worthy of wonder, 'wondrous-strange.'

111. **overcome us**, come over us, *i. e.*, overshadow us. "The point of the comparison lies in the unexpectedness with which a cloud in summer darkens the fields and then passes off again."

112. **You make me strange**, etc., *i. e.*, you make me a stranger even to my own feelings, unable to comprehend the motive of my fear.

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Ross. What sights, my lord?

Lady Macbeth. I pray you, speak not; he grows worse and worse;
Question enrages him: at once, good night:
Stand not upon the order of your going,
But go at once.

Lennox. Good night; and better health 120
Attend his majesty!

Lady Macbeth. A kind good night to all!

[*Exeunt all but* MACBETH *and* LADY MACBETH.

Macbeth. It will have blood: they say blood will have blood:
Stones have been known to move and trees to speak;
Augures and understood relations have
By maggot-pies and choughs and rooks brought forth
The secret'st man of blood. What is the night?

Lady Macbeth. Almost at odds with morning, which is which.

119. **Stand not upon the order of your going**, *i. e.*, do not be punctilious about going in the order of your rank (as etiquette required).

124. **Augures**, auguries. **understood relations.** "The utterances of birds are apparently called relations" (Abbott).

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122. **blood will have blood.** "So transcendently convincing is the dramatist's art in this scene that, in a sense, it defeats his further purposes. All other tortures that Nemesis can inflict upon Macbeth seem superflous after this apocalypse of the inward hell which is devouring him. But the stern Shaksperean ethics demand a double retribution upon the sinner, at the bar of the world, as well as in his own breast. *Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht*, and the dramatist therefore makes the crowning outrage against Banquo not only a source of mental torture to Macbeth, but the beginning of his fall from power."—*Boas.* See also Moulton's *Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist*, p. 128.

127. **Almost at odds with morning.** "Lady Macbeth, worn out by the effort she has made to maintain her self-possession in the presence of her guests, answers briefly and mournfully to her husband's questions, adding no word of comment, much less of reproach.

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Macbeth. How say'st thou, that Macduff denies his person
At our great bidding?
Lady Macbeth. Did you send to him, sir?
Macbeth. I hear it by the way, but I will send:
There 's not a one of them but in his house
I keep a servant fee'd. I will to-morrow,
And betimes I will, to the weird sisters:
More shall they speak, for now I am bent to know,
By the worst means, the worst. For mine own good
All causes shall give away: I am in blood
Stepp'd in so far that, should I wade no more,
Returning were as tedious as go o'er:

128. **How say'st thou**, *i. e.*, what say'st thou to this.
133. **betimes**, early. Cf. 'timely,' II. iii. 51.
138. **as go o'er**, as to go o'er.

Thus the part was rendered by Miss Helen Faucit, one of the best of all modern interpreters of Shakespeare" (Clarendon).

"Another thing has always struck me. During the supper scene, in which Macbeth is haunted by the spectre of the murdered Banquo, and his reason appears unsettled by the extremity of his horror and dismay, her indignant rebuke, her low-whispered remonstrance, the sarcastic emphasis with which she combats his sick fancies, and endeavors to recall him to himself, have an intenseness, a severity, a bitterness, which makes the blood creep. Yet when the guests are dismissed, and they are left alone, she says no more, and not a syllable of reproach or scorn escapes her; a few words in submissive reply to his questions, and an entreaty to seek repose, are all she permits herself to utter. There is a touch of pathos and of tenderness in this silence which has always affected me beyond expression: it is one of the most masterly and most beautiful traits of character in the whole play."—*Mrs. Jameson.*

128. "Not a word is said by either Macbeth or Lady Macbeth about the events of the supper or about Banquo's death. Whatever may be the reason for this, the effect of the conversation about Macduff is to carry the audience on without a stop to the Macduff episode. To such skilful devices as this the play owes in great part its extreme rapidity of movement."—*Manly.*

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Strange things I have in head that will to hand,
Which must be acted ere they may be scann'd.
Lady Macbeth. You lack the season of all natures, sleep.
Macbeth. Come, we 'll to sleep. My strange and self-abuse
Is the initiate fear that wants hard use:
We are yet but young in deed. [*Exeunt.*

Scene V. *A heath.*

Thunder. Enter the three Witches, *meeting* Hecate.

First Witch. Why, how now, Hecate! you look angerly.
Hecate. Have I not reason, beldams as you are,
Saucy and over-bold? How did you dare
To trade and traffic with Macbeth
In riddles and affairs of death;
And I, the mistress of your charms,
The close contriver of all harms,
Was never call'd to bear my part,
Or show the glory of our art?
And, which is worse, all you have done
Hath been but for a wayward son,

139. **will**, *i. e.*, 'I purpose.'

140. **scann'd**, examined closely. Cf. IV. i. 145–149.

141. **the season** (the seasoning) **of all natures**, *i. e.*, that which preserves and keeps all natures fresh.

142. **self-abuse**, self-deception or self-delusion 'proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain.' For 'strange and self' cf. 'self and violent' hands, V. viii. 70.

143. **the initiate fear**, *i. e.*, the fear that attends the first initiation into a career of crime before 'hard use' has hardened the conscience.

144. **in deed**, *i. e.*, in evil deed, in crime.

Scene v.—In all probability this scene was not written by Shakspere. The portions of the text rejected by Richard Grant White are, Act III. sc. v.; Act IV. sc. i. lines 1–47, also from 'Sweet bodements,' line 96, to 'mortal custom,' and lines 125–132; Act. IV. sc. iii. lines 140–159; and Act. V. sc. viii. lines 35–75. See Furness.

1. **angerly**, angrily.

7. **close**, secret.

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Spiteful and wrathful; who, as others do,
Loves for his own ends, not for you.
But make amends now: get you gone,
And at the pit of Acheron
Meet me i' the morning: thither he
Will come to know his destiny:
Your vessels and your spells provide,
Your charms and every thing beside.
I am for the air; this night I 'll spend
Unto a dismal and a fatal end:
Great business must be wrought ere noon:
Upon the corner of the moon
There hangs a vaporous drop profound;
I 'll catch it ere it come to ground:
And that distill'd by magic sleights
Shall raise such artificial sprites
As by the strength of their illusion
Shall draw him on to his confusion:
He shall spurn fate, scorn death, and bear
His hopes 'bove wisdom, grace and fear:
And you all know security
Is mortals' chiefest enemy.

[*Music and a song within: 'Come away, come away,' etc.*

Hark! I am call'd; my little spirit, see,
Sits in a foggy cloud, and stays for me. [*Exit.*

First Witch. Come, let 's make haste; she 'll soon be back again. [*Exeunt.*

15. **Acheron**, a river in Greece believed to be a passage to the lower world. The name is here applied to 'some foul tarn or gloomy pool' in the vicinity of Macbeth's castle.

26. **sleights**, artifices.

27. **artificial**, made by art.

29. **confusion**, ruin, destruction.

32. **security**, over-confidence resulting in carelessness.

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SCENE VI. *Forres. The Palace.*

Enter LENNOX *and another* Lord.

Lennox. My former speeches have but hit your thoughts,
Which can interpret farther: only I say
Things have been strangely borne. The gracious Duncan
Was pitied of Macbeth: marry, he was dead:
And the right-valiant Banquo walk'd too late;
Whom, you may say, if 't please you, Fleance kill'd
For Fleance fled: men must not walk too late.
Who cannot want the thought, how monstrous
It was for Malcolm and for Donalbain
To kill their gracious father? damned fact!
How it did grieve Macbeth! did he not straight,
In pious rage, the two delinquents tear,
That were the slaves of drink and thralls of sleep?
Was not that nobly done? Ay, and wisely too;
For 'twould have anger'd any heart alive
To hear the men deny 't. So that, I say,
He has borne all things well: and I do think
That, had he Duncan's sons under his key—
As, an 't please heaven, he shall not—they should find
What 'twere to kill a father; so should Fleance.
But, peace! for from broad words, and 'cause he fail'd
His presence at the tyrant's feast, I hear,
Macduff lives in disgrace: sir, can you tell
Where he bestows himself?

Lord. The son of Duncan,
From whom this tyrant holds the due of birth,

Scene vi.—1. **hit**, agreed with.
3. **borne**, conducted.
4. **pitied of**, pitied by.
8. **cannot want**, can want, *i. e.*, Who is without the thought?
21. **from**, on account of. **broad**, plain-spoken.
25. **holds**, withholds.

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Lives in the English court, and is received
Of the most pious Edward with such grace
That the malevolence of fortune nothing
Takes from his high respect. Thither Macduff
Is gone to pray the holy king, upon his aid
To wake Northumberland and warlike Siward:
That by the help of these, with Him above
To ratify the work, we may again
Give to our tables meat, sleep to our nights,
Free from our feasts and banquets bloody knives,
Do faithful homage and receive free honours:
All which we pine for now: and this report
Hath so exasperate the king that he
Prepares for some attempt at war.

Lennox. Sent he to Macduff?

Lord. He did: and with an absolute 'Sir, not I,'
The cloudy messenger turns me his back,
And hums, as who should say 'You 'll rue the time
That clogs me with this answer.'

Lennox. And that well might
Advise him to a caution, to hold what distance
His wisdom can provide. Some holy angel
Fly to the court of England and unfold
His message ere he come, that a swift blessing
May soon return to this our suffering country
Under a hand accursed!

Lord. I 'll send my prayers with him.

[*Exeunt.*

26. **is received Of**, is received by.

27. **the most pious Edward**, Edward the Confessor.

30. **upon his aid**, in his aid.

36. **free honours**, *i. e.*, 'honours without slavery, without dread of a tyrant.'

41. **cloudy**, frowning. **turns me his back.** "'Me' is here a kind of enclitic adding vivacity to the description" (Clarendon). Cf. 'Knock me on this door.'

48. Our country suffering under a hand accursed.

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ACT FOURTH.

SCENE I. *A cavern. In the middle, a boiling cauldron.*

Thunder. Enter the three Witches.

First Witch. Thrice the brinded cat hath mew'd.
Second Witch. Thrice and once the hedge-pig whined.
Third Witch. Harpier cries 'Tis time, 'tis time.'
First Witch. Round about the cauldron go:
In the poison'd entrails throw.
Toad, that under cold stone
Days and nights has thirty one
Swelter'd venom sleeping got,
Boil thou first i' the charmed pot.
All. Double, double toil and trouble; 10
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.
Second Witch. Fillet of a fenny snake,
In the cauldron boil and bake;
Eye of newt and toe of frog,
Wool of bat and tongue of dog,
Adder's fork and blind-worm's sting,
Lizard's leg and howlet's wing,

Scene i.—For a discussion of the significance of the Weird Sisters, see pp. 28–38.

1. **the brinded** (brindled) **cat**, *i. e.*, Grimalkin. "A cat, from time immemorial, has been the agent and favourite of witches" (Warburton).

6. **cold**,—here dissyllabic (co'old).

8. **Swelter'd**, 'caused to exude by heat' (Skeat).

12. **Fillet**, slice. 'A slice of snake from the fens.'

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5. "The imagination of the poets contemporary with Shakespeare ran riot in devising loathsome ingredients for witches messes."—*Clarendon.*

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For a charm of powerful trouble,
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.
All. Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.
Third Witch. Scale of dragon, tooth of wolf,
Witches' mummy, maw and gulf
Of the ravin'd salt-sea shark,
Root of hemlock digg'd i' the dark,
Liver of blaspheming Jew,
Gall of goat and slips of yew
Sliver'd in the moon's eclipse,
Nose of Turk and Tartar's lips,
Finger of birth-strangled babe
Ditch-deliver'd by a drab,
Make the gruel thick and slab:
Add thereto a tiger's chaudron,
For the ingredients of our cauldron.
All. Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.
Second Witch. Cool it with a baboon's blood,
Then the charm is firm and good.
Enter HECATE *to the other three* Witches.
Hecate. O, well done! I commend your pains;
And every one shall share i' the gains:

23. **maw.** Cf. III. iv. 73. **gulf**, gullet.
24. **ravin'd**, ravenous.
26. **blaspheming**, *i. e.*, in denying the divinity of Christ.
32. **slab**, slimy, thick.
33. **chaudron**, entrails. 'Cauldron was a perfect rhyme, the *l* being then silent' (White).

30. "It is observable that Shakespeare, on this great occasion, which involves the fate of a king, multiplies all the circumstances of horror. The babe, whose finger is used, must be strangled in its birth; the grease must not only be human, but must have dropped from a gibbet, the gibbet of a murderer; and even the sow, whose blood is used, must have offended nature by devouring her own farrow. These are touches of judgment and genius."—***Johnson.***

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And now about the cauldron sing,
Like elves and fairies in a ring,
Enchanting all that you put in.

[*Music and a song: 'Black spirits,' etc.*

[HECATE *retires.*

Second Witch. By the pricking of my thumbs,
Something wicked this way comes:
Open, locks,
Whoever knocks!

Enter MACBETH.

Macbeth. How now, you secret, black, and midnight hags!
What is 't you do?

All. A deed without a name.

Macbeth. I conjure you, by that which you profess,
Howe'er you come to know it, answer me:
Though you untie the winds and let them fight
Against the churches; though the yesty waves
Confound and swallow navigation up;
Though bladed corn be lodged and trees blow down;
Though castles topple on their warders' heads;
Though palaces and pyramids do slope
Their heads to their foundations; though the treasure
Of nature's germins tumble all together,
Even till destruction sicken; answer me
To what I ask you.

First Witch. Speak.

Second Witch. Demand.

Third Witch. We 'll answer.

First Witch. Say, if thou 'dst rather hear it from our mouths,
Or from our masters?

48. Cf. the visit of Saul to the witch of Endor, I. Samuel, xxviii. 7–25.
53. **yesty**, foaming, frothy like yeast.
54. **Confound.** Cf. II. ii. 11. **navigation**, ships.
59. **germins**, germs, seeds.
60. **sicken**, *i. e.*, with satiety, be surfeited.

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Macbeth. Call 'em, let me see 'em.

First Witch. Pour in sow's blood, that hath eaten
Her nine farrow; grease that 's sweaten
From the murderer's gibbet throw
Into the flame.

All. Come, high or low;
Thyself and office deftly show!

Thunder. First Apparition: *an armed Head.*

Macbeth. Tell me, thou unknown power,—

First Witch. He knows thy thought:
Hear his speech, but say thou nought.

First Apparition. Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth! beware Macduff;
Beware the thane of Fife. Dismiss me: enough.
[*Descends.*

Macbeth. Whate'er thou art, for thy good caution thanks;
Thou hast harp'd my fear aright: but one word more,—

First Witch. He will not be commanded: here 's another,
More potent than the first.

Thunder. Second Apparition: *a bloody Child.*

Second Apparition. Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth!

Macbeth. Had I three ears, I 'ld hear thee.

Second Apparition. Be bloody, bold and resolute; laugh to scorn
The power of man, for none of woman born
Shall harm Macbeth. [*Descends.*

74. **harp'd**, struck the key-note of.

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68. "The armed head represents symbolically Macbeth's head cut off and brought to Malcolm by Macduff. The bloody child is Macduff untimely ripped from his mother's womb. The child with a crown on his head and a bough in his hand is the royal Malcolm, who ordered his soldiers to hew them down a bough and bear it before them to Dunsinane."—*Upton.*

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Macbeth. Then live, Macduff: what need I fear of thee?
But yet I 'll make assurance doubly sure,
And take a bond of fate: thou shalt not live;
That I may tell pale-hearted fear it lies,
And sleep in spite of thunder.

Thunder. Third Apparition: *a Child crowned, with a tree in his hand.*

What is this,
That rises like the issue of a king,
And wears upon his baby-brow the round
And top of sovereignty?

All. Listen, but speak not to 't.

Third Apparition. Be lion-mettled, proud, and take no care
Who chafes, who frets, or where conspirers are:
Macbeth shall never vanquish'd be until
Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill
Shall come against him. [*Descends.*

Macbeth. That will never be:
Who can impress the forest, bid the tree
Unfix his earth-bound root? Sweet bodements! good!
Rebellion's head, rise never, till the wood
Of Birnam rise, and our high-placed Macbeth
Shall live the lease of nature, pay his breath

84. **take a bond of fate**, *i. e.*, make the promise of fate irrevocable by killing Macduff, the only one whom he was to 'beware.'

88. **round and top of sovereignty**, the crown, 'the top, or summit, of sovereign power.'

95. **impress**, force into service.

96. **bodements**, announcements, predictions.

99. **the lease of nature**, the term of natural life.

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84. "It will be noted, that, contrary to Holinshed, Shakspere makes Macbeth change his intention in regard to Macduff at once: this obviates the necessity of introducing a motive for the change, which would impede the rapid movement of the play."—*Manly.*

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To time and mortal custom. Yet my heart
Throbs to know one thing: tell me, if your art
Can tell so much: shall Banquo's issue ever
Reign in this kingdom?

All. Seek to know no more.

Macbeth. I will be satisfied: deny me this,
And an eternal curse fall on you! Let me know:
Why sinks that cauldron? and what noise is this? [*Hautboys*

First Witch. Show!

Second Witch. Show!

Third Witch. Show!

All. Show his eyes, and grieve his heart;
Come like shadows, so depart!

A show of eight Kings, the last with a glass in his hand; Banquo's Ghost following.

Macbeth. Thou art too like the spirit of Banquo: down!
Thy crown does sear mine eye-balls. And thy hair,
Thou other gold-bound brow, is like the first.
A third is like the former. Filthy hags!
Why do you show me this? A fourth! Start, eyes!
What, will the line stretch out to the crack of doom?
Another yet! A seventh! I 'll see no more:
And yet the eighth appears, who bears a glass
Which shows me many more; and some I see
That two-fold balls and treble sceptres carry:
Horrible sight! Now I see 'tis true;
For the blood-bolter'd Banquo smiles upon me,
And points at them for his. What, is this so?

100. **mortal custom**, the custom to which all mortals submit, the custom of dying.

106. **noise**, music.

116. **start, eyes**,—'from your sockets' (Clarendon), 'from such a sight' (Delius).

117. **the crack of doom**, 'the thunder-peal announcing the last Judgement' (Clarendon).

123. **blood-bolter'd**, *i. e.*, with hair matted together with clotted blood.

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First Witch. Ay, sir, all this is so: but why
Stands Macbeth thus amazedly?
Come, sisters, cheer we up his sprites,
And show the best of our delights:
I 'll charm the air to give a sound,
While you perform your antic round,
That this great king may kindly say
Our duties did his welcome pay.

[*Music. The* Witches *dance, and then vanish with* HECATE.

Macbeth. Where are they? Gone? Let this pernicious hour
Stand aye accursed in the calendar!
Come in, without there!

Enter LENNOX.

Lennox. What 's your grace's will?
Macbeth. Saw you the weird sisters?
Lennox. No, my lord.
Macbeth. Came they not by you?
Lennox. No indeed, my lord.
Macbeth. Infected be the air whereon they ride,
And damn'd all those that trust them! I did hear
The galloping of horse: who was 't came by?
Lennox. 'Tis two or three, my lord, that bring you word
Macduff is fled to England.
Macbeth. Fled to England!
Lennox. Ay, my good lord.
Macbeth. [*Aside.*] Time, thou anticipatest my dread exploits:
The flighty purpose never is o'ertook

127. **sprites**, spirits.
134. **aye**, forever. Note the difference in the pronunciation of *aye*, forever, and of *aye*, yes.
144. **anticipatest**, dost prevent, forestall.
145. **flighty**, fleeting.

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Unless the deed go with it: from this moment
The very firstlings of my heart shall be
The firstlings of my hand. And even now,
To crown my thoughts with acts, be it thought and done:
The castle of Macduff I will surprise;
Seize upon Fife; give to the edge o' the sword
His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls
That trace him in his line. No boasting like a fool;
This deed I 'll do before this purpose cool:
But no more sights!—Where are these gentlemen?
Come, bring me where they are. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *Fife. Macduff's castle.*

Enter LADY MACDUFF, *her* SON, *and* ROSS.

Lady Macduff. What had he done, to make him fly the land?

Ross. You must have patience, madam.

Lady Macduff. He had none:
His flight was madness: when our actions do not,
Our fears do make us traitors.

Ross. You know not
Whether it was his wisdom or his fear.

Lady Macduff. Wisdom! to leave his wife, to leave his babes,
His mansion and his titles, in a place
From whence himself does fly? He loves us not;
He wants the natural touch: for the poor wren,
The most diminutive of birds, will fight,
Her young ones in her nest, against the owl.

153. **That trace** (follow) **him in his line**, that are of his lineage.

Scene ii.—For comments on this scene, see Notes, p. 191.

7. **his titles**, his possessions, the things to which he held the title. (Cf. *title*-deed.)

9. **the natural touch**, *i. e.*, family affection, manifested by the wren even.

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All is the fear and nothing is the love;
As little is the wisdom, where the flight
So runs against all reason.
Ross. My dearest coz,
I pray you, school yourself: but, for your husband,
He is noble, wise, judicious, and best knows
The fits o' the season. I dare not speak much further:
But cruel are the times, when we are traitors
And do not know ourselves; when we hold rumour
From what we fear, yet know not what we fear,
But float upon a wild and violent sea
Each way and move. I take my leave of you:
Shall not be long but I 'll be here again:
Things at the worst will cease, or else climb upward
To what they were before. My pretty cousin,
Blessing upon you!
Lady Macduff. Father'd he is, and yet he 's fatherless.
Ross. I am so much a fool, should I stay longer,
It would be my disgrace and your discomfort:
I take my leave at once. [*Exit.*
Lady Macduff. Sirrah, your father 's dead:
And what will you do now? How will you live?
Son. As birds do, mother.
Lady Macduff. What, with worms and flies?

12. **All is the fear**, *i. e.*, fear, not love, must have determined his action.

15. **for**, as for, as regards.

17. **the fits**, the caprices. Cf. 'the temper of the times.'

19. **hold rumour**, etc., *i. e.*, "when we interpret rumours in accordance with our fear, yet know not exactly what it is we fear." Cf. *King John*, IV. ii. 144–146, "I find the people strangely fantasied, Possessed with rumours, full of wild dreams, Not knowing what they fear, but full of fear."

22. **Each way and move.** Possibly 'each way we move' or 'float and move each way.'

24. **or else climb upward**,—a reference to the wheel of Fortune.

29. **It** (*i. e.*, my tears) **would be my disgrace.**

32. **with worms**, on worms.

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Son. With what I get, I mean; and so do they.

Lady Macduff. Poor bird! thou 'ldst never fear the net nor lime,
The pitfall nor the gin.

Son. Why should I, mother? Poor birds they are not set for.
My father is not dead, for all your saying.

Lady Macduff. Yes, he is dead: how wilt thou do for a father?

Son. Nay, how will you do for a husband?

Lady Macduff. Why, I can buy me twenty at any market.

Son. Then you 'll buy 'em to sell again.

Lady Macduff. Thou speak'st with all thy wit, and yet, i' faith,
With wit enough for thee.

Son. Was my father a traitor, mother?

Lady Macduff. Ay, that he was.

Son. What is a traitor?

Lady Macduff. Why, one that swears and lies.

Son. And be all traitors that do so?

Lady Macduff. Every one that does so is a traitor, and must be hanged.

Son. And must they all be hanged that swear and lie?

Lady Macduff. Every one.

Son. Who must hang them?

Lady Macduff. Why, the honest men.

Son. Then the liars and swearers are fools; for there

34. **lime**, bird-lime.

35. **gin**, snare.

36. **Poor birds.** "The emphasis is on 'Poor,' and the meaning is that in life, traps are not set for the poor, but for the rich. The boy's precocious intelligence enhances the pity of his early death" (Clarendon).

37. **for** (*i. e.*, in spite of) **all your saying.**

47. **swears and lies**, *i. e.*, swears allegiance and commits perjury. Cf. line 51 for the literal sense of the words.

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are liars and swearers enow to beat the honest men and hang up them.

Lady Macduff. Now, God help thee, poor monkey!
But how wilt thou do for a father?

Son. If he were dead, you 'ld weep for him: if you would not, it were a good sign that I should quickly have a new father.

Lady Macduff. Poor prattler, how thou talk'st!

Enter a Messenger.

Messenger. Bless you, fair dame! I am not to you known,
Though in your state of honour I am perfect.
I doubt some danger does approach you nearly:
If you will take a homely man's advice,
Be not found here; hence, with your little ones.
To fright you thus, methinks I am too savage;
To do worse to you were fell cruelty,
Which is too nigh your person. Heaven preserve you!
I dare abide no longer. [*Exit.*

Lady Macduff. Whither should I fly?
I have done no harm. But I remember now
I am in this earthly world, where to do harm
Is often laudable, to do good sometime
Accounted dangerous folly: why then, alas,
Do I put up that womanly defence,
To say I have done no harm?—What are these faces?

Enter Murderers.

59. **poor monkey**, a term of endearment. Cf. 'poor fool,' *King Lear*, V. iii. 305.

66. **your state of honour**, etc., *i. e.*, "I am well acquainted with your noble rank and character."

67. **doubt**, suspect, fear.

68. **homely**, humble.

70. **To fright you**, in frighting you.

71. **fell**, fierce, dire, dreadful.

76. **sometime**, sometimes.

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First Murderer. Where is your husband?
Lady Macduff. I hope, in no place so unsanctified
Where such as thou mayst find him.
First Murderer. He 's a traitor.
Son. Thou liest, thou shag-ear'd villain!
First Murderer. What, you egg!
[*Stabbing him.*
Young fry of treachery!
Son. He has kill'd me, mother:
Run away, I pray you! [*Dies.*
[*Exit* LADY MACDUFF, *crying* '*Murderer!*'
Exeunt Murderers, *following her.*

SCENE III. *England. Before the King's palace.*

Enter MALCOLM *and* MACDUFF.

Malcolm. Let us seek out some desolate shade, and there
Weep our sad bosoms empty.
Macduff. Let us rather
Hold fast the mortal sword, and like good men
Bestride our down-fall'n birthdom: each new morn
New widows howl, new orphans cry, new sorrows
Strike heaven on the face, that it resounds
As if it felt with Scotland and yell'd out
Like syllable of dolour.
Malcolm. What I believe, I 'll wail;
What know, believe; and what I can redress,

83. **shag-ear'd**, having hairy ears.
83. **egg, fry**, terms of contempt, 'fry of treachery,' 'spawn of a traitor.'
Scene iii.—3. **mortal**, death-giving. **good men**, brave men, good regarded as soldiers.
4. **bestride**, stand over to defend. **birthdom**, *i. e.*, the land of our birth, our mother country.
6. **that**, so that.
8. **Like syllable of dolour**, a similar cry of grief.

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As I shall find the time to friend, I will.
What you have spoke, it may be so perchance.
This tyrant, whose sole name blisters our tongues,
Was once thought honest: you have loved him well;
He hath not touch'd you yet. I am young; but something
You may deserve of him through me; and wisdom
To offer up a weak, poor, innocent lamb
To appease an angry god.

Macduff. I am not treacherous.

Malcolm. But Macbeth is.
A good and virtuous nature may recoil
In an imperial charge. But I shall crave your pardon;
That which you are, my thoughts cannot transpose:
Angels are bright still, though the brightest fell:
Though all things foul would wear the brows of grace,
Yet grace must still look so.

Macduff. I have lost my hopes.

Malcolm. Perchance even there where I did find my doubts.
Why in that rawness left you wife and child,
Those precious motives, those strong knots of love,
Without leave-taking? I pray you,
Let not my jealousies be your dishonours,
But mine own safeties. You may be rightly just,
Whatever I shall think.

Macduff. Bleed, bleed, poor country:

10. **to friend**, for a friend, friendly.
12. **sole name**, name alone, mere name.
15. **wisdom**, *i. e.*, it were wisdom.
19. **may recoil In an imperial charge**, *i. e.*, 'may revert (to evil) under a king's command.'
21. **transpose**, change.
24. **look so**, *i. e.*, like grace. "Virtue must wear its proper form, though that form be counterfeited by villainy" (Johnson).
26. **rawness**, haste, unprotected condition.
29. **jealousies**, suspicions. "Do not regard my suspicions as intended to dishonor you, but to secure my own safety."

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Great tyranny, lay thou thy basis sure,
For goodness dare not check thee: wear thou thy wrongs;
The title is affeer'd. Fare thee well, lord:
I would not be the villian that thou think'st
For the whole space that 's in the tyrant's grasp
And the rich East to boot.

Malcolm. Be not offended:
I speak not as in absolute fear of you.
I think our country sinks beneath the yoke;
It weeps, it bleeds, and each new day a gash
Is added to her wounds: I think withal
There would be hands uplifted in my right;
And here from gracious England have I offer
Of goodly thousands: but for all this,
When I shall tread upon the tyrant's head,
Or wear it on my sword, yet my poor country
Shall have more vices than it had before,
More suffer and more sundry ways than ever,
By him that shall succeed.

Macduff. What should he be?

Malcolm. It is myself I mean: in whom I know
All the particulars of vice so grafted

33. **wear thou thy wrongs.** *thou* is variously interpreted to refer to Scotland, to tyranny, to Malcolm.
34. **affeer'd**, confirmed.
37. **to boot**, in addition; literally, for an advantage.
39. **I think**, 'I bear in mind that' (Rolfe).
43. **England**, the king of England.
47. **shall have**, is sure to have. Cf. III. iv. 57.
48. **more sundry**, *i. e.*, in more various.
49. **What**, who.
51. **particulars**, 'special forms,' enumerated in lines 60–100.

50. "Why does Malcolm make this self-accusation? Partly to try the temper of Macduff's patriotism. For it is only Malcolm's private sins that his subject regards as 'portable.' When he adds that he lacks also 'the king-becoming graces,' then Macduff's 'noble passion' shows itself."—*Chambers.*

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That, when they shall be open'd, black Macbeth
Will seem as pure as snow, and the poor state
Esteem him as a lamb, being compared
With my confineless harms.
Macduff. Not in the legions
Of horrid hell can come a devil more damn'd
In evils to top Macbeth.
Malcolm. I grant him bloody,
Luxurious, avaricious, false, deceitful,
Sudden, malicious, smacking of every sin
That has a name: but there 's no bottom, none,
In my voluptuousness: your wives, your daughters,
Your matrons, and your maids, could not fill up
The cistern of my lust, and my desire
All continent impediments would o'erbear,
That did oppose my will: better Macbeth
Than such an one to reign.
Macduff. Boundless intemperance
In nature is a tyranny; it hath been
The untimely emptying of the happy throne,
And fall of many kings. But fear not yet
To take upon you what is yours: you may
Convey your pleasures in a spacious plenty,
And yet seem cold, the time you may so hoodwink:
We have willing dames enough; there cannot be

52. **open'd**, unfolded,—a continuation of the metaphor in 'grafted.'
55. **confineless**, boundless.
57. **to top**, to overtop, to surpass.
58. **luxurious**, lascivious.
59. **sudden**, violent, passionate.
64. **continent**, restraining.
66, 67. Either Boundless intemperance In nature, *i. e.*, want of control over the natural appetites is a tyranny, or boundless intemperance is in its very nature a tyranny. "If the latter, the phrase illustrates the Platonic description of the overmastering passion in the soul, as being to a man what a tyrant is to a state."
69. **yet**, notwithstanding.
71. **convey**, enjoy secretly.

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That vulture in you, to devour so many
As will to greatness dedicate themselves,
Finding it so inclined.

Malcolm. With this there grows
In my most ill-composed affection such
A stanchless avarice that, were I king,
I should cut off the nobles for their lands,
Desire his jewels and this other's house:
And my more-having would be as a sauce
To make me hunger more, that I should forge
Quarrels unjust against the good and loyal,
Destroying them for wealth.

Macduff. This avarice
Sticks deeper, grows with more pernicious root
Than summer-seeming lust, and it hath been
The sword of our slain kings: yet do not fear;
Scotland hath foisons to fill up your will
Of your mere own: all these are portable,
With other graces weigh'd.

Malcolm. But I have none: the king-becoming graces,
As justice, verity, temperance, stableness,
Bounty, perseverance, mercy, lowliness,
Devotion, patience, courage, fortitude,
I have no relish of them, but abound
In the division of each several crime,

77. **my ill-composed affection**, my disposition compounded of evil qualities.
78. **stanchless**, insatiable.
80. **his jewels**, this one's jewels.
82. **that**, so that. **forge**, fabricate, invent.
86. **summer-seeming**, *i. e.*, like the summer not enduring, whereas avarice 'sticks deeper' and does not pass away.
88. **foisons**, abundance, rich harvests.
89. **your mere own**, your own absolutely. **portable**, bearable.
93. **persev'erance.**
95. **relish**, flavor.
96. **In the division of**, *i. e.*, in every form of.

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Acting it many ways. Nay, had I power, I should
Pour the sweet milk of concord into hell,
Uproar the universal peace, confound
All unity on earth.
Macduff. O Scotland, Scotland!
Malcolm. If such a one be fit to govern, speak:
I am as I have spoken.
Macduff. Fit to govern!
No, not to live. O nation miserable!
With an untitled tyrant bloody-scepter'd,
When shalt thou see thy wholesome days again,
Since that the truest issue of thy throne
By his own interdiction stands accursed,
And does blaspheme his breed? Thy royal father
Was a most sainted king: the queen that bore thee,
Oftener upon her knees than on her feet,
Died every day she lived. Fare thee well!
These evils thou repeat'st upon thyself
Have banish'd me from Scotland. O my breast,
Thy hope ends here!
Malcolm. Macduff, this noble passion,
Child of integrity, hath from my soul
Wiped the black scruples, reconciled my thoughts
To thy good truth and honour. Devilish Macbeth
By many of these trains hath sought to win me
Into his power; and modest wisdom plucks me

107. **interdiction**, exclusion. The allusion is to the Papal interdicts deposing disobedient sovereigns. Malcolm, in asserting his 'confineless harms,' stood accursed by 'his own interdiction.'

108. **blaspheme his breed**, slander his parentage.

111. **Died every day**, *i. e.*, 'she only lived spiritually.'

112. **repeat'st**, tellest.

118. **trains**, artifices, devices, lures.

119. **modest wisdom**, etc., *i. e.*, distrust of myself holds me back for 'mine own safeties' from granting my confidence 'with over-credulous haste.' Cf. the conclusion of his father, the king, "There is no art To find the mind's construction in the face," I. iv. 11.

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From over-credulous haste: but God above
Deal between thee and me! for even now
I put myself to thy direction, and
Unspeak mine own detraction; here abjure
The taints and blames I laid upon myself,
For strangers to my nature. I am yet
Unknown to woman, never was forsworn,
Scarcely have coveted what was mine own,
At no time broke my faith, would not betray
The devil to his fellow, and delight
No less in truth than life: my first false speaking
Was this upon myself: what I am truly,
Is thine and my poor country's to command:
Whither indeed, before thy here-approach,
Old Siward, with ten thousand warlike men,
Already at a point, was setting forth.
Now we 'll together, and the chance of goodness
Be like our warranted quarrel! Why are you silent?

Macduff. Such welcome and unwelcome things at once
'Tis hard to reconcile.

Enter a Doctor.

Malcolm. Well, more anon. Comes the king forth, I pray you?

Doctor. Ay, sir; there are a crew of wretched souls
That stay his cure: their malady convinces
The great assay of art; but at his touch,
Such sanctity hath heaven given his hand,
They presently amend.

123. That is, unsay, or recall, the evil things I have spoken against myself.

125. **For strangers**, as being strangers.

126. **forsworn**, perjured.

135. **at a point**, prepared.

136. **the chance of goodness**, etc. "May the chance of success be as certain as the justice of our quarrel" (Clarendon). See Furness.

142. **stay**, wait for. **convinces**, etc., overpowers the greatest effort of skill.

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Malcolm. I thank you, doctor. [*Exit* Doctor.

Macduff. What 's the disease he means?

Malcolm. 'Tis call'd the evil:
A most miraculous work in this good king;
Which often, since my here-remain in England,
I have seen him do. How he solicits heaven,
Himself best knows: but strangely-visited people,
All swoln and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,
The mere despair of surgery, he cures,
Hanging a golden stamp about their necks,
Put on with holy prayers: and 'tis spoken,
To the succeeding royalty he leaves
The healing benediction. With this strange virtue
He hath a heavenly gift of prophecy,
And sundry blessings hang about his throne
That speak him full of grace.

Enter Ross.

Macduff. See, who comes here?

Malcolm. My countryman; but yet I know him not.

Macduff. My ever gentle cousin, welcome hither.

Malcolm. I know him now: good God, betimes remove
The means that makes us strangers!

Ross. Sir, amen.

146. **the evil**, the king's evil, scrofula. See Notes, p. 191.

149. **solicits heaven**, moves or prevails upon heaven by prayer.

150. **strangely-visited**, strangely afflicted, afflicted with strange diseases.

152. **mere**, absolute.

159. **speak**, bespeak, proclaim.

162. **betimes**. Cf. III. iv. 133.

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146. "This episode is of the nature of a courtly compliment. But it has a dramatic purpose also. The picture of the good King Edward curing his subjects' disorders is in strong contrast to the tyranny and cruelty of Macbeth beyond the border."—*Chambers.* Schiller, however, omitted this passage in his translation of *Macbeth.*

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Macduff. Stands Scotland where it did?
Ross. Alas, poor country!
Almost afraid to know itself! It cannot
Be call'd our mother, but our grave: where nothing,
But who knows nothing, is once seen to smile;
Where sighs and groans and shrieks that rend the air,
Are made, not mark'd; where violent sorrow seems
A modern ecstasy; the dead man's knell
Is there scarce ask'd for who; and good men's lives
Expire before the flowers in their caps,
Dying or ere they sicken.
Macduff. O, relation
Too nice, and yet too true!
Malcolm. What 's the newest grief?
Ross. That of an hour's age doth hiss the speaker;
Each minute teems a new one.
Macduff. How does my wife?
Ross. Why, well.
Macduff. And all my children?
Ross. Well too.
Macduff. The tyrant has not batter'd at their peace?
Ross. No; they were well at peace when I did leave 'em.
Macduff. Be not a niggard of your speech: how goes 't?
Ross. When I came hither to transport the tidings,
Which I have heavily borne, there ran a rumour

167. **once**, ever.
170. **A modern ecstasy**, an ordinary grief.
172. **flowers in their caps**. ". . . it being customary with the Highlanders, when on a march, to stick sprigs of heath in their bonnets."—*H. Rowe.*
173. **or ere**, before. **O, relation Too nice**, *i. e.*, narration too elaborate.
175. **doth hiss the speaker**,—for touching on ancient history instead of 'the newest state' of this revolt.
176. **teems**, brings forth.
182. **heavily**, with a heavy heart, sadly.

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Of many worthy fellows that were out:
Which was to my belief witness'd the rather,
For that I saw the tyrant's power a-foot;
Now is the time of help; your eye in Scotland
Would create soldiers, make our women fight,
To doff their dire distresses.
Malcolm. Be 't their comfort
We are coming thither: gracious England hath
Lent us good Siward and ten thousand men;
An older or a better soldier none
That Christendom gives out.
Ross. Would I could answer
This comfort with the like! But I have words
That would be howl'd out in the desert air,
Where hearing should not latch them.
Macduff. What concern they?
The general cause? or is it a fee-grief
Due to some single breast?
Ross. No mind that 's honest
But in it shares some woe, though the main part
Pertains to you alone.
Macduff. If it be mine,
Keep it not from me, quickly let me have it.
Ross. Let not your ears despise my tongue for ever,
Which shall possess them with the heaviest sound
That ever yet they heard.
Macduff. Hum! I guess at it.

183. **out**, *i. e.*, in the field, in revolt.
184. **witness'd**, made credible.
185. **For that**, because. **power**, army.
188. **doff**, do off, put off.
191, 192. There is no one that the Christian world declares to be an older and a better soldier.
195. **latch**, catch.
196. **a fee-grief**, 'a grief that hath a single owner' (Johnson).
197. **No mind**, *i. e.*, there is no mind that 's, etc.
202. **possess them**, make them possessors of.

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Ross. Your castle is surprised; your wife and babes
Savagely slaughter'd: to relate the manner,
Were, on the quarry of these murder'd deer,
To add the death of you.
Malcolm. Merciful heaven!
What, man! ne'er pull your hat upon your brows;
Give sorrow words: the grief that does not speak
Whispers the o'erfraught heart, and bids it break.
Macduff. My children too?
Ross. Wife, children, servants, all
That could be found.
Macduff. And I must be from thence!
My wife kill'd too?
Ross. I have said.
Malcolm. Be comforted:
Let 's make us medicines of our great revenge,
To cure this deadly grief.
Macduff. He has no children. All my pretty ones?
Did you say all? O hell-kite! All?
What, all my pretty chickens and their dam
At one fell swoop?
Malcolm. Dispute it like a man.
Macduff. I shall do so;
But I must also feel it as a man:

206. **quarry**, a heap of slaughtered game.

210. **Whispers** (whispers to) **the o'erfraught** (the overburdened) **heart, and bids it break.** Cf. the 'She must weep or she will die' of *The Princess.*

212. **must be**, was destined to be.

216. **He has no children.** For discussion as to whether *he* refers to Macbeth or to Malcolm, see Furness.

220. **Dispute it**, *i. e.*, fight with your grief.

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214. "The situation has changed since the beginning of the scene. It is now Malcolm who is anxious to push on to the contemplated enterprise, while Macduff in his turn is deadened by personal grief, and desires only to 'weep his sad bosom empty.'"

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I cannot but remember such things were,
That were most precious to me. Did heaven look on,
And would not take their part? Sinful Macduff,
They were all struck for thee! naught that I am,
Not for their own demerits, but for mine,
Fell slaughter on their souls: heaven rest them now!
Malcolm. Be this the whetstone of your sword: let grief
Convert to anger; blunt not the heart, enrage it.
Macduff. O, I could play the woman with mine eyes,
And braggart with my tongue! But, gentle heavens,
Cut short all intermission; front to front
Bring thou this fiend of Scotland and myself;
Within my sword's length set him; if he 'scape,
Heaven forgive him too!
Malcolm. This tune goes manly.
Come, go we to the king; our power is ready;
Our lack is nothing but our leave. Macbeth
Is ripe for shaking, and the powers above
Put on their instruments. Receive what cheer you may;
The night is long that never finds a day. [*Exeunt.*

225. **naught**, worthless, vile.
227. **rest**, give rest to, give peace to.
229. **Convert to**, change to.
232. **intermission**, delay.
237. **Our lack**, *i. e.*, 'All that we have left to do is to take leave' (of the king).
239. **Put on**, incite, set to work.

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ACT FIFTH.

SCENE I. *Dunsinane. Ante-room in the castle.*

Enter a Doctor of Physic *and a* Waiting-Gentlewoman.

Doctor. I have two nights watched with you, but can perceive no truth in your report. When was it she last walked?

Gentlewoman. Since his majesty went into the field, I have seen her rise from her bed, throw her nightgown upon her, unlock her closet, take forth paper, fold it, write upon 't, read it, afterwards seal it, and again return to bed; yet all this while in a most fast sleep.

Doctor. A great perturbation in nature, to receive at once the benefit of sleep and do the effects of watching! In this slumbery agitation, besides her walking and other actual performances, what, at any time, have you heard her say?

Gentlewoman. That, sir, which I will not report after her.

Doctor. You may to me, and 'tis most meet you should.

Gentlewoman. Neither to you nor any one, having no witness to confirm my speech.

Enter LADY MACBETH, *with a taper.*

Lo you, here she comes! This is her very guise, and, upon my life, fast asleep. Observe her; stand close.

Scene i.—5. **nightgown**, dressing-gown. Cf. II. ii. 70.

11. **the effects**, the actions.

12. **of watching**, of waking, *i. e.*, pertaining to the waking hours.

13. **actual performances**, *i. e.*, acts as distinguished from thoughts or speech.

22. **her very guise**, her accustomed manner.

24. **close**, quiet. Cf. III. v. 7.

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Doctor. How came she by that light?

Gentlewoman. Why, it stood by her: she has light by her continually; 'tis her command.

Doctor. You see, her eyes are open.

Gentlewoman. Ay, but their sense is shut.

Doctor. What is it she does now? Look, how she rubs her hands.

Gentlewoman. It is an accustomed action with her, to seem thus washing her hands: I have known her continue in this a quarter of an hour.

Lady Macbeth. Yet here 's a spot.

Doctor. Hark! she speaks: I will set down what comes from her, to satisfy my remembrance the more strongly.

Lady Macbeth. Out, damned spot! out, I say! One: two: why, then 'tis time to do 't. Hell is murky.

40. **Hell is murky.** "She certainly imagines herself here talking to Macbeth, who (she supposes) had just said 'Hell is murky' (*i. e.*, hell is a dismal place to go to in consequence of such a deed), and repeats his words in contempt of his cowardice."—*Steevens.*

"We do not agree with Steevens. Her recollections of the deed and its motives alternate with recollections of her subsequent remorse and dread of future punishment."—*Clarendon.*

"The retribution has begun. We see first its workings in the soul of Lady Macbeth. Throughout she is more spiritual than her husband, and with her it takes the form, not of fear, but of remorse —a brooding remorse that gradually unstrings every nerve. She has taken less and less part in each succeeding crime; since act iii. scene 4 she has been absent from the stage; she has almost passed out of the life of her husband. Yet in her disordered brain, the details of his crimes jostle with those of her own. The struggle with memory and conscience has proved too much for her; her old self-command and triumphant sovereignty of will are gone."—*Chambers.*

"The exit leaves nothing but pity for remorse, and that is what should be left."—Comment of *The Saturday Review*, London, March, 1889, on Ellen Terry in the sleep-walking scene.

See the Introduction, pp. 46–55, and the footnotes to III. ii. 4–7.

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Fie, my lord, fie! a soldier, and afeard? What need we fear who knows it, when none can call our power to account? Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?

Doctor. Do you mark that?

Lady Macbeth. The thane of Fife had a wife; where is she now? What, will these hands ne'er be clean? No more o' that, my lord, no more o' that: you mar all with this starting.

Doctor. Go to, go to; you have known what you should not.

Gentlewoman. She has spoke what she should not, I am sure of that: heaven knows what she has known.

Lady Macbeth. Here's the smell of the blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh, oh, oh!

Doctor. What a sigh is there! The heart is sorely charged.

Gentlewoman. I would not have such a heart in my bosom for the dignity of the whole body.

Doctor. Well, well, well,—

Gentlewoman. Pray God it be, sir.

Doctor. This disease is beyond my practice: yet I have known those which have walked in their sleep who have died holily in their beds.

Lady Macbeth. Wash your hands; put on your night-gown; look not so pale: I tell you yet again, Banquo's buried; he cannot come out on 's grave.

Doctor. Even so?

Lady Macbeth. To bed, to bed: there 's knocking at the

51. **Go to**,—a phrase with various meanings, here an expression of disapprobation.

59. **sorely charged**, heavily burdened.

62. **the dignity of the whole body**, 'the queenly rank of the lady herself' (Clarendon).

70. **on 's**, of his.

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gate: come, come, come, come, give me your hand: what 's done cannot be undone: to bed, to bed, to bed. [*Exit.*

Doctor. Will she go now to bed?

Gentlewoman. Directly.

Doctor. Foul whisperings are abroad: unnatural deeds
Do breed unnatural troubles: infected minds
To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets:
More needs she the divine than the physician.
God, God forgive us all! Look after her;
Remove from her the means of all annoyance,
And still keep eyes upon her. So good night:
My mind she has mated and amazed my sight:
I think, but dare not speak.

Gentlewoman. Good night, good doctor.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *The country near Dunsinane.*

Drum and colours. Enter MENTEITH, CAITHNESS, ANGUS, LENNOX, *and* Soldiers.

Menteith. The English power is near, led on by Malcolm,
His uncle Siward and the good Macduff:
Revenges burn in them; for their dear causes
Would to the bleeding and the grim alarm
Excite the mortified man.

Angus. Near Birnam wood
Shall we well meet them; that way are they coming.

Caithness. Who knows if Donalbain be with his brother?

Lennox. For certain, sir, he is not: I have a file

80. **infected minds**, *i. e.*, minds infected with 'unnatural deeds,' with crime.

84. **annoyance**, injury, *i. e.*, of injuring herself.

86. **mated**, bewildered, dazed.

Scene ii.—3. **dear**, deeply felt.

4. **alarm**, call to arms.

5. **mortified**, dead; or, perhaps, dead to the world.

8. **file**, list.

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Of all the gentry: there is Siward's son,
And many unrough youths, that even now
Protest their first of manhood.
Menteith. What does the tyrant?
Caithness. Great Dunsinane he strongly fortifies:
Some say he 's mad; others, that lesser hate him,
Do call it valiant fury: but, for certain,
He cannot buckle his distemper'd cause
Within the belt of rule.
Angus. Now does he feel
His secret murders sticking on his hands;
Now minutely revolts upbraid his faith-breach;
Those he commands move only in command,
Nothing in love: now does he feel his title
Hang loose about him, like a giant's robe
Upon a dwarfish thief.
Menteith. Who then shall blame
His pester'd senses to recoil and start,
When all that is within him does condemn
Itself for being there?
Caithness. Well, march we on,
To give obedience where 'tis truly owed:
Meet we the medicine of the sickly weal,
And with him pour we, in our country's purge,
Each drop of us.
Lennox. Or so much as it needs

10. **unrough**, beardless.
11. **Protest**, etc., proclaim or testify to their early manhood. For 'first of manhood' cf. 'my near'st of life,' *i. e.*, my inmost life, III. i. 118.
15. **his distempered cause**, "the disorganized party, the disordered body over which he rules" (Clarendon).
18. **minutely**, happening every minute, continual.
19. **in command**, under the weight of command, *i. e.*, through fear. For the meaning of *in*, cf. IV. iii. 20.
20. **Nothing**, 'often used adverbially.'
23. **pester'd**, troubled. **to recoil**, for recoiling.
27. **the medicine**, the physician, *i. e.*, Malcolm.

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To dew the sovereign flower and drown the weeds.
Make we our march towards Birnam.

[*Exeunt, marching.*

SCENE III. *Dunsinane. A room in the castle.*

Enter MACBETH, Doctor, *and* Attendants.

Macbeth. Bring me no more reports; let them fly all:
Till Birnam wood remove to Dunsinane
I cannot taint with fear. What 's the boy Malcolm?
Was he not born of woman? The spirits that know
All mortal consequences have pronounced me thus:
'Fear not, Macbeth; no man that 's born of woman
Shall e'er have power upon thee.' Then fly, false thanes,
And mingle with the English epicures:
The mind I sway by and the heart I bear
Shall never sag with doubt nor shake with fear.

Enter a Servant.

The devil damn thee black, thou cream-faced loon!
Where got'st thou that goose look?

Servant. There is ten thousand—

Macbeth. Geese, villain?

Servant. Soldiers, sir.

Macbeth. Go prick thy face and over-red thy fear,
Thou lily-liver'd boy. What soldiers, patch?
Death of thy soul! those linen cheeks of thine
Are counsellors to fear. What soldiers, whey-face?

Servant. The English force, so please you.

Macbeth. Take thy face hence. [*Exit* Servant.

Scene iii.—1. **them**, *i. e.*, the 'false thanes.'

3. **taint**, be infected.

5. **all mortal consequences**, *i. e.*, all consequences pertaining to mortals. **me**, to me.

9. **sway by**, am directed by.

15. **lily-livered**, cowardly. **patch**, fool.

16. **linen cheeks**, *i. e.*, cheeks white as linen.

17. **counsellors to fear**, *i. e.*, they incite fear in others.

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Seyton!—I am sick at heart,
When I behold—Seyton, I say!—This push
Will cheer me ever, or disseat me now.
I have lived long enough: my way of life
Is fall'n into the sear, the yellow leaf,
And that which should accompany old age,
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
I must not look to have; but, in their stead,
Curses, not loud but deep, mouth-honour, breath,
Which the poor heart would fain deny, and dare not.
Seyton!

Enter SEYTON.

Seyton. What 's your gracious pleasure?
Macbeth. What news more?
Seyton. All is confirm'd, my lord, which was reported.
Macbeth. I 'll fight, till from my bones my flesh be hack'd.
Give me my armour.
Seyton. 'Tis not needed yet.
Macbeth. I 'll put it on.
Send out moe horses, skirr the country round;
Hang those that talk of fear. Give me mine armour.
How does your patient, doctor?
Doctor. Not so sick, my lord,
As she is troubled with thick-coming fancies,
That keep her from her rest.
Macbeth. Cure her of that.
Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased,

20. **push**, attack. Cf. the football phrase, 'in the push.'
21. **disseat**, unseat. For conjectural readings, see Furness.
35. **moe**, more. **skirr**, scour.

22. "Macbeth's mention of himself as being now in the autumn of life, and his anticipation of the period when he shall be old, is one of those touches of long time systematically thrown in at intervals, to convey the effect of a sufficiently elapsed period for the reign of the usurper since his murder of the preceding king, Duncan."—*Clarke.*

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Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
And with some sweet oblivious antidote
Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart?
Doctor. Therein the patient
Must minister to himself.
Macbeth. Throw physic to the dogs, I 'll none of it.
Come, put mine armour on; give me my staff.
Seyton, send out. Doctor, the thanes fly from me.
Come, sir, dispatch. If thou couldst, doctor, cast
The water of my land, find her disease
And purge it to a sound and pristine health,
I would applaud thee to the very echo,
That should applaud again. Pull 't off, I say.
What rhubarb, senna, or what purgative drug,
Would scour these English hence? Hear'st thou of them?
Doctor. Ay, my good lord; your royal preparation
Makes us hear something.
Macbeth. Bring it after me.
I will not be afraid of death and bane
Till Birnam forest come to Dunsinane.

42. **written**,—and therefore permanent.
43. **oblivious**, causing oblivion, *i. e.*, forgetfulness. Cf. 'the insane root,' I. iii. 84.
48. **staff**, 'lance' (Schmidt), 'general's baton' (Clarendon).
50. **cast the water**,—a medical term.
59. **bane**, destruction, ruin.

60. "Macbeth is still relying upon the predictions of the weird sisters, but the affliction of his own thoughts, the desertions of his followers, the distressing condition of his wife, have brought him to such a state of restlessness and heartsickness that not the most absolute trust in the predictions can avail him. Such a glimpse of him before the fulfilment of the prophecies, could hardly have been omitted without changing the whole character of the end of the play."—*Manly.*

"Thus with consummate art . . . Shakespeare enables us to extend

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Doctor. [*Aside.*] Were I from Dunsinane away and clear,
Profit again should hardly draw me here. [*Exeunt.*

Scene IV. *Country near Birnam wood.*

Drum and colours. Enter Malcolm, Old Siward *and his* Son, Macduff, Menteith, Caithness, Angus, Lennox, Ross, *and* Soldiers, *marching.*

Malcolm. Cousins, I hope the days are near at hand
That chambers will be safe.
Menteith. We doubt it nothing.
Siward. What wood is this before us?
Menteith. The wood of Birnam.
Malcolm. Let every soldier hew him down a bough,
And bear 't before him: thereby shall we shadow
The numbers of our host, and make discovery
Err in report of us.
Soldiers. It shall be done.
Siward. We learn no other but the confident tyrant
Keeps still in Dunsinane, and will endure
Our setting down before 't.
Malcolm. 'Tis his main hope: 10
For where there is advantage to be given,
Both more and less have given him the revolt,
And none serve with him but constrained things
Whose hearts are absent too.

Scene iv.—2. **that**, when. **nothing**, not.
6. **discovery**, reconnoitering. Cf. *King Lear*, V. i. 53.
8. **no other but**, *i. e.*, nothing except that.
10. **Our setting down before 't**, *i. e.*, our besieging it.
11. "This passage as it stands is not capable of any satisfactory explanation" (Clarendon). For conjectures, see Furness.
12. **Both more and less**, the great and the small.

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to him a certain measure of pity, without which the completely tragic effect would be lost. And this is helped by the return of something of his old courage in the actual presence of danger."—*Chambers.*

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Macduff. Let our just censures
Attend the true event, and put we on
Industrious soldiership.
Siward. The time approaches,
That will with due decision make us know
What we shall say we have and what we owe.
Thoughts speculative their unsure hopes relate,
But certain issue strokes must arbitrate:
Towards which advance the war. [*Exeunt, marching.*

SCENE V. *Dunsinane. Within the castle.*

Enter MACBETH, SEYTON, *and* Soldiers, *with drum and colours.*

Macbeth. Hang out our banners on the outward walls;
The cry is still 'They come:' our castle's strength
Will laugh a siege to scorn: here let them lie
Till famine and the ague eat them up:
Were they not forced with those that should be ours,
We might have met them dareful, beard to beard,
And beat them backward home. [*A cry of women within.*
What is that noise?
Seyton. It is the cry of women, my good lord. [*Exit.*
Macbeth. I have almost forgot the taste of fears:
The time has been, my senses would have cool'd
To hear a night-shriek, and my fell of hair
Would at a dismal treatise rouse and stir
As life were in 't: I have supp'd full with horrors;

14. **just censures.** *Just* is used proleptically, *i. e.*, "let us act the part of true soldiers, that the event may prove our judgments just."
19, 20. 'Let us act and not speculate.'
20. **arbitrate**, determine.
Scene v.—5. **forced**, reinforced.
11. **fell of hair.** *Fell* is, literally, skin. My fell of hair is, then, my scalp of hair or simply my hair.
12. **a dismal treatise**,—'a ghost story, for example.'
13. **As**, as if. **with**, on, *i. e.*, supp'd on.

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Direness, familiar to my slaughterous thoughts,
Cannot once start me.

Re-enter SEYTON.

Wherefore was that cry?

Seyton. The queen, my lord, is dead.

Macbeth. She should have died hereafter;

15. **once**, ever. **start**, startle.

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16. **The queen, my lord, is dead.** "It is one of the finest thoughts in the whole drama, that Lady Macbeth should die before her husband; for not only does this exhibit him in a new light, equally interesting morally and psychologically, but it prepares a gradual softening of the horror of the catastrophe. Macbeth, left alone, resumes much of that connexion with humanity which he had so long abandoned; his thoughtfulness becomes pathetic, his sickness of heart awakens sympathy; and when at last he dies the death of a soldier, the stern satisfaction with which we contemplate the act of justice that destroys him is unalloyed by feelings of personal wrath or hatred. His fall is a sacrifice, not a butchery."—*The Edinburgh Review*, July, 1840.

17. **She should have died hereafter.** "... those profound words in which Shakespeare has embodied a whole melancholy life-philosophy: ... This is the final result arrived at by Macbeth, the man who staked all to win power and glory. Without any underlining on the part of the poet, a speech like this embodies an absolute moral lesson."—*Brandes.*

"*She should have died hereafter*, is supposed by some editors to mean, 'Her death ought to have been postponed to a more appropriate time.' This is also the interpretation of the Davenant version (1674), which reads: 'She should have di'd hereafter, I brought Her here, to see my Victi(m)es, not to Die.' But what we have here is not a reply to Seyton's announcement; to that there is no reply. The whole of Macbeth's speech, including this line and the next, is spoken to himself, and with no thought of any listener. Scene iii. had shown him to us, sick at heart and despairing of happiness or honor, deserted by his followers, and keenly sensible what a miserable failure he had made of his life. In this scene he reaches a lower depth of misery. Not only does he feel the failure of his own life, he regards life itself as without purpose or significance. With the death of his wife has passed away the last person

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There would have been a time for such a word.
To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life 's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

21. **recorded time**, "time of which a record shall be kept as opposed to eternity" (Dalgleish).

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attached to him by any other bond than fear. In a sort of benumbed silence he has received the announcement of the breaking of his last human tie, and slowly all his desolation, heartsickness, sense of life's failure, shape themselves into the feeling that nothing makes any difference. 'She would have had to die some day; there would have come a time for such an announcement. Why wish to postpone it till to-morrow? Postpone as you will, morrow follows morrow in the same petty, meaningless course, and lands us at last, deceived and befooled, in the dust of an endless death.'

Many editors, of course, have maintained this interpretation of *should* as 'would inevitably,' but it was from Professor Kittredge that I first learned to see that what Macbeth says here about life is no mere untimely utterance of unmotived pessimism, but grows immediately out of the dramatic situation, and that the connection between the parts is perfect."—*Manly.*

In "his [Salvini's] reception of the news of *Lady Macbeth's* death, there is a sincerity of grief in his delivery of the words, 'She should have died hereafter,' with which he drops into his chair and buries his face for a moment in his hands; then, with a sudden sense of the monotony and weariness of his hateful career, he exclaims, 'To-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow,' etc.,—with the fretful disgust of an insatiably selfish man, rather than the melancholy of an afflicted one."—*The Century Magazine*, November, 1881.

Consider whether Salvini's 'fretful disgust' in the rendering of these lines appeals to you, or whether, on the contrary, it lessens the pathos of Macbeth's situation and lowers the tone of the passage.

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Enter a Messenger.

Thou comest to use thy tongue; thy story quickly.

Messenger. Gracious my lord,
I should report that which I say I saw,
But know not how to do it.

Macbeth. Well, say, sir.

Messenger. As I did stand my watch upon the hill,
I look'd toward Birnam, and anon, methought,
The wood began to move.

Macbeth. Liar and slave!

Messenger. Let me endure your wrath, if 't be not so:
Within this three mile may you see it coming;
I say, a moving grove.

Macbeth. If thou speak'st false,
Upon the next tree shalt thou hang alive,
Till famine cling thee: if thy speech be sooth,
I care not if thou dost for me as much.
I pull in resolution, and begin
To doubt the equivocation of the fiend
That lies like truth: 'Fear not, till Birnam wood
Do come to Dunsinane;' and now a wood
Comes toward Dunsinane. Arm, arm, and out!
If this which he avouches does appear,
There is nor flying hence nor tarrying here.
I 'gin to be a-weary of the sun,
And wish the estate o' the world were now undone.
Ring the alarum-bell! Blow, wind! come, wrack!
At least we 'll die with harness on our back. [*Exeunt.*

31. **I should report**, I ought to report.

40. **cling thee**, shrivel thee up.

42. **pull in**, rein in, check, *i. e.*, as a horse is checked. *Pall* and also *pale* have been suggested as emendations.

50. **the estate o' the world**, 'the world's settled order' (Clarendon).

52. **harness**, armor.

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SCENE VI. *Dunsinane. Before the castle.*

Drum and colours. Enter MALCOLM, OLD SIWARD, MACDUFF, *and their Army, with boughs.*

Malcolm. Now near enough; your leavy screens throw down,
And show like those you are. You, worthy uncle,
Shall, with my cousin, your right noble son,
Lead our first battle: worthy Macduff and we
Shall take upon 's what else remains to do,
According to our order.

Siward. Fare you well.
Do we but find the tyrant's power to-night,
Let us be beaten, if we cannot fight.

Macduff. Make all our trumpets speak; give them all breath,
Those clamorous harbingers of blood and death. 10

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII. *Another part of the field.*

Alarums. Enter MACBETH.

Macbeth. They have tied me to a stake; I cannot fly,
But bear-like I must fight the course. What 's he

Scene vi.—1. **leavy**, leafy. In *Much Ado About Nothing*, II. iii. 75, *leavy* rhymes with *heavy*.

2. **show**, appear.

4. **battle**, battalion, division.

6. **order**, plan of battle.

Scene vii.—1. In bear-baiting the bear was tied to a stake and several dogs set on him at once. Each attack was called a 'course.' Cf. a 'bout' in fencing, a 'round' in prize-fighting.

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1. See in *Kenilworth* the petition of the keeper of a bear-garden praying the Queen to close up the playhouse of one William Shakspere on the ground that the plays were proving so attractive as to diminish the attendance at the bear-garden, 'the nurse of English manly courage.'

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That was not born of woman? Such a one
Am I to fear, or none.

Enter YOUNG SIWARD.

Young Siward. What is thy name?

Macbeth. Thou 'lt be afraid to hear it.

Young Siward. No; though thou call'st thyself a hotter name
Than any is in hell.

Macbeth. My name 's Macbeth.

Young Siward. The devil himself could not pronounce a title
More hateful to mine ear.

Macbeth. No, nor more fearful.

Young Siward. Thou liest, abhorred tyrant; with my sword
I 'll prove the lie thou speak'st.

[*They fight, and* YOUNG SIWARD *is slain.*

Macbeth. Thou wast born of woman.
But swords I smile at, weapons laugh to scorn,
Brandish'd by man that 's of a woman born. [*Exit.*

Alarums. Enter MACDUFF.

Macduff. That way the noise is. Tyrant, show thy face!
If thou be'st slain and with no stroke of mine,
My wife and children's ghost will haunt me still.
I cannot strike at wretched kerns, whose arms
Are hired to bear their staves: either thou, Macbeth,
Or else my sword, with an unbatter'd edge,
I sheathe again undeeded. There thou shouldst be;
By this great clatter, one of greatest note
Seems bruited: let me find him, fortune!
And more I beg not. [*Exit. Alarums.*

16. **will haunt me still**, will haunt me ever.

18. **staves**, spear staves, lances. The *a* has the sound of *a* in *arm*.

either thou. The line as it stands is incomplete.

19. **undeeded**, *i. e.*, having done no deed of slaughter.

22. **bruited**, reported with clamor, announced.

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Enter MALCOLM *and* OLD SIWARD.

Siward. This way, my lord; the castle 's gently render'd:
The tyrant's people on both sides do fight;
The noble thanes do bravely in the war;
The day almost itself professes yours,
And little is to do.

Malcolm. We have met with foes
That strike beside us.

Siward. Enter, sir, the castle.
[*Exeunt. Alarum.*

SCENE VIII. *Another part of the field.*

Enter MACBETH.

Macbeth. Why should I play the Roman fool, and die
On mine own sword? whiles I see lives, the gashes
Do better upon them.

Enter MACDUFF.

Macduff. Turn, hell-hound, turn!

Macbeth. Of all men else I have avoided thee:
But get thee back; my soul is too much charged
With blood of thine already.

Macduff. I have no words:
My voice is in my sword, thou bloodier villain
Than terms can give thee out! [*They fight.*

Macbeth. Thou losest labour:
As easy mayst thou the intrenchant air

24. **gently render'd**, yielded without a struggle.

29. **strike beside us**, 'deliberately miss us' (Clarendon), 'fight by our sides' (Delius).

Scene viii.—1. **play the Roman fool**, *i. e.*, commit suicide, as did Brutus, Cassius, Cato, Antony, etc.

4. **Of all men else.** An instance of 'the confusion of two constructions in superlatives.' Cf. 'The fairest of her daughters, Eve.'

9. **intrenchant**, indivisible, 'retaining no trace of a cut.' Cf. 'the woundless air,' IV. i. 44, and 'the air invulnerable,' *Hamlet*, I. i. 146.

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With thy keen sword impress as make me bleed:
Let fall thy blade on vulnerable crests;
I bear a charmed life, which must not yield
To one of woman born.
Macduff. Despair thy charm,
And let the angel whom thou still hast served
Tell thee, Macduff was from his mother's womb
Untimely ripp'd.
Macbeth. Accursed be that tongue that tells me so,
For it hath cow'd my better part of man!
And be these juggling fiends no more believed,
That palter with us in a double sense;
That keep the word of promise to our ear,
And break it to our hope. I 'll not fight with thee.
Macduff. Then yield thee, coward,
And live to be the show and gaze o' the time:
We 'll have thee, as our rarer monsters are,
Painted upon a pole and underwrit,
'Here may you see the tyrant.'
Macbeth. I will not yield,
To kiss the ground before young Malcolm's feet,
And to be baited with the rabble's curse.
Though Birnam wood be come to Dunsinane,
And thou opposed, being of no woman born,
Yet I will try the last: before my body

12. **a charmed life.** "In the days of chivalry, the champion's arms being ceremoniously blessed, each took an oath that he used no *charmed* weapons. Macbeth, according to the law of arms, or perhaps only in allusion to this custom, tells Macduff of the security he had in the prediction of the spirit" (Upton). **must not yield,** is destined or is under obligation not to yield.

14. **the angel,** genius, demon. Cf. V. v. 43.

18. **my better part of man,** *i. e.*, the better part of my manhood, my courage.

20. **palter,** equivocate. See Snider, p. 194.

26. **Painted upon a pole,** *i. e.*, on cloth suspended on a pole.

29. **baited,**—as a bear is baited by dogs.

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I throw my warlike shield: lay on, Macduff;
And damn'd be him that first cries 'Hold, enough!'
[*Exeunt, fighting. Alarums.*

Retreat. Flourish. Enter, with drum and colours, MALCOLM, OLD SIWARD, ROSS, *the other* Thanes, *and* Soldiers.

Malcolm. I would the friends we miss were safe arrived.
Siward. Some must go off: and yet, by these I see,
So great a day as this is cheaply bought.
Malcolm. Macduff is missing, and your noble son.
Ross. Your son, my lord, has paid a soldier's debt:
He only lived but till he was a man; 40
The which no sooner had his prowess confirm'd
In the unshrinking station where he fought,
But like a man he died.
Siward. Then he is dead?
Ross. Ay, and brought off the field: your cause of sorrow
Must not be measured by his worth, for then
It hath no end.
Siward. Had he his hurts before?
Ross. Ay, on the front.
Siward. Why then, God's soldier be he!
Had I as many sons as I have hairs,
I would not wish them to a fairer death:
And so his knell is knoll'd.

34. "In 'damn'd be *him*,' perhaps *let*, or some such word, was implied" (Abbott).

36. **go off**, die.

42. **the unshrinking station**, 'unshrinking attitude' (Moberly), 'the post from which he did not flinch' (Clarendon).

44. **your cause of sorrow**, your sorrow.

49. **wish them to a fairer death.** "In Elizabethan English one may either wish things for a person or wish the person to the things."

50. **his knell is knoll'd**, *i. e.*, "there is no need to give way to further

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34. "In all likelihood Shakespeare's part in the play ended here." —*Clarendon.*

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Malcolm. He 's worth more sorrow,
And that I 'll spend for him.
Siward. He 's worth no more:
They say he parted well and paid his score:
And so God be with him! Here comes newer comfort.

Re-enter MACDUFF, *with* MACBETH'S *head.*

Macduff. Hail, king! for so thou art: behold, where stands
The usurper's cursed head: the time is free:
I see thee compass'd with thy kingdom's pearl,
That speak my salutation in their minds;
Whose voices I desire aloud with mine:
Hail, King of Scotland!
All. Hail, King of Scotland!
[*Flourish.*

Malcolm. We shall not spend a large expense of time
Before we reckon with your several loves,
And make us even with you. My thanes and kinsmen,
Henceforth be earls, the first that ever Scotland
In such an honour named. What 's more to do,
Which would be planted newly with the time,
As calling home our exiled friends abroad
That fled the snares of watchful tyranny,
Producing forth the cruel ministers
Of this dead butcher and his fiend-like queen,

lamentation." "Do you think that the old soldier is concealing beneath brave words the great grief in his heart, or has he been so long a soldier that he can talk honestly in this way?"—*Pattee.*

52. **parted well**, departed well, *i. e.*, died nobly.

56. **thy kingdom's pearl**, thy kingdom's ornament, *i. e.*, the nobility.

61. **your several loves**, the love of each of you.

68. **Producing forth**,—in order to punish.

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69. **fiend-like queen.** See note to line 34. According to Clark and Wright this characterization of Lady Macbeth in all probability was not written by Shakspere.

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Who, as 'tis thought, by self and violent hands
Took off her life; this, and what needful else
That calls upon us, by the grace of Grace
We will perform in measure, time and place:
So thanks to all at once and to each one,
Whom we invite to see us crown'd at Scone.
[*Flourish. Exeunt.*

"Shakspere pursues Macbeth no farther. He does not follow him with yearning conjecture, as Mr. Browning follows the murderer of his poem, *The Ring and the Book*,

> 'Into that sad, obscure, sequester'd state,
> Where God unmakes but to remake the soul
> He else made first in vain.'"

—*Dowden.*

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NOTES.

ACT I.

Scene i.

1–10. "The verse with four accents is rarely used by Shakespeare, except when witches or other extraordinary beings are introduced as speaking. Then he often uses a verse of four accents with rhyme" (Abbott, 504).

"*Heath* was formerly written *heth*, and so would rhyme with Macbeth" (Deighton).

2. **or in rain.** "The question is not which of the three they should meet in, but when they should meet for their incantations" (Jennens). Some editors, therefore, adopting Hanmer's emendation of the text, read *and* in rain.

12. **Hover.** See Abbott, 466.

Scene ii.

3, 5. **sergeant**, trisyllabic. **Hail**, dissyllabic. See Abbott, 479, 484.

6. **Say to the king**, etc., *i. e.*, tell the king what you know of the battle.

10. **for to that.** "*To* hence means motion, 'with a view to,' 'for an end'" (Abbott, 186).

13. **Of.** See Abbott, 171.

21. **Which ne'er shook hands.** "There is some incurable corruption of the text here" (Clarendon). As it stands, the antecedent of *which* is perhaps *Macbeth*. Koppel, however, makes it *slave*, "who never found time for the preliminary formalities of a duel, *i. e.*, shaking hands with and bidding farewell to the opponent." Capell's change of *Which ne'er* to *And ne'er* is adopted in some editions. White suggests that if these four words, *Which ne'er shook hands*, were omitted, as they might well be, both sense and rhythm would be complete.

22. Cf. "Then from the navel to the throat at once He ript old Priam," *Dido, Queene of Carthage*. The result of a stroke upward is referred to in Dante, *Purgatory*, xxviii.,

> "How is Mohammed mangled! before me
> Walks Ali weeping, *from the chin his face*
> *Cleft to the forelock.*"

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34. **captains**, trisyllabic, *i. e.*, cap(*i*)tains. See Abbott, 477.

37. **cracks**, charges,—an example of metonymy, the effect being put for the cause.

40. **memorize another Golgotha**, *i. e.*, make memorable another place of death like the Golgotha, or 'place of a skull,' where Christ was crucified.

43. **So well.** See Abbott, 275.

47. **That seems to speak.** Cf. Lady Macbeth's words in I. v. 64,

> "Your face, my thane, is as a book where men
> May read strange matters."

49. **flout the sky.** "We must suppose," says Chambers, "that Ross is referring, in a vivid historic present, to the moment of the first attack, when the Scotch were 'cold' with alarm." Keightley, however, reads *Did* flout the sky.

52–55. **The thane of Cawdor.** "What is said of the thane of Cawdor, lines 52, 53, is inconsistent with what follows in scene iii, lines 72, 73, and 112 seq." (Clarendon). For a vigorous statement of this charge of inconsistency, see Johnson, quoted by Furness in a note to line 64. Is the implication inevitable that Cawdor assisted Norway *in person?* Was it Cawdor or Norway that Macbeth 'confronted' with self-comparisons? If the supposition be allowable that Cawdor's assistance was '*hidden* help and vantage,' does this materially lessen the inconsistency in the references to him? Or one may here recall the view that (as stated by Barrett Wendell), "*Macbeth*, in its present condition, is evidently incomplete,—either an unfinished sketch, or an abridgment of a finished play." If the latter, apparent inconsistencies would be explained by this 'rehandling' of the play for the stage.

54. **Till that.** For *that* as a conjunctional affix, see Abbott, 287.

55. **self-comparisons**, *i. e.*, "comparisons between their two selves. *Self* can modify the sense of a word with which it is compounded in almost any fashion. Thus, 'self-borne arms' in *Richard II*, ii. 3. 80, *i. e.*, arms divided against themselves, civil war."—*Chambers.*

58. **That now.** 'So before that is very frequently omitted' (Abbott, 283). Cf. I. vii. 8; II. ii. 7, 24. For the verse, see Abbott, 511.

59. **Norways' king**, *i. e.*, the king of the Norwegians. See Abbott, 433.

61. **Saint Colme's inch**, a small island in the Firth of Edinburgh. '*Inch* or *inse*, in Erse, signifies an island' (Collier).

62. **dollars.** The use of this word here is an anachronism, as was the reference to *cannons* in line 37. "The dollar was first coined about 1518, in the Valley of St. Joachim, in Bohemia, whence its name, 'Joachim's-thaler'; 'thaler,' 'dollar'" (Clarendon).

Scene iii.

2. **Killing swine.** Steevens cites *A Detection of Damnable Driftes practized by Three Witches*, etc. (1579), ". . . she came on a tyme to the house of one Robert Lathburie, . . . who, dislyking her dealyng, sent her

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home emptie; but presently after her departure, his hogges fell sicke and died, to the number of twentie."

5. **mounch'd**, chewed with closed lips.

8. **in a sieve.** See reference to the trial of Dr. Fian by King James, p. 29.

9. **a rat without a tail.** See p. 62. See also in any encyclopædia *werewolf*.

17. **the shipman's card.** Either the sailor's sailing chart or the card, or dial, of the compass on which the points, N. E. S. W. etc., are marked.

22. **se'nnights**, seven nights. We still have the term *fortnight* for fourteen nights.

32. **weird**, dissyllabic. See Abbott, 485.

45. **should be.** See Abbott, 323.

55, 56. "**present grace**, **noble having**, and **royal hope** correspond to the three sentences of the prophecy." **having**, possession.

60. Who neither beg your favours nor fear your hate.

73. **A prosperous gentleman.** "Yet in i. 2. 52, Ross speaks of Cawdor as in league with the Norwegians. We can hardly suppose that Macbeth is unaware of this. A reference to the passages of Holinshed used by Shakespeare for this and the preceding scenes will show that in the history the disgrace of Cawdor followed after an interval the Norwegian invasion. In writing this speech Shakespeare may have forgotten that he had altered that point. Or, of course, the discrepancy may be due to some rehandling of the play for stage purposes."—*E. K. Chambers.*

"Shakespeare has here been charged with an inconsistency in making Macbeth speak in these terms of one who, in ii. 52, 53, is said to have 'assisted' the King of Norway. I have already pointed out that the word 'assisted' does not at all necessarily imply assistance in person; and it is quite possible that Macbeth, having left the field of battle as soon as it was over to proceed to Forres, and not having yet joined the king, was ignorant of Cawdor's treachery and of the sentence passed upon him. If so, there is nothing strange in speaking of that thane as *a prosperous gentleman*. That Cawdor's defection was the result of sudden impulse may, I think, be inferred from Duncan's surprise when informed of it by Ross; and that the exact facts were not generally known is shown by the words of Angus, iii. 111–114, though he, as Ross' companion, might be presumed to have heard them so far as they had been ascertained. Shakespeare nowhere states that Cawdor had taken part in the battle."—*Deighton.*

84. **eaten on.** "*On* is frequently used where we use 'of'" (Abbott, 181).

92. **do contend**, *i. e.*, "admiration of your deeds, and a desire to do them justice by public commendation, contend in his mind for pre-eminence."—*Collier.*

93. **silenced with that**, *i. e.*, with that contention, or mental conflict.

"'Thine' refers to 'praises,' 'his' to 'wonders,' and the meaning is:

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There is a conflict in the king's mind between his astonishment at the achievement and his admiration of the achiever; he knows not how sufficiently to express his own wonder and to praise Macbeth, so that he is reduced to silence. *That*, the mental conflict just described."—*Clarendon.*

94. **In,** 'in the act of or while' (Abbott, 164).

97. **As thick as hail.** Some editors read, As thick as tale, *i. e.*, as fast as they could be told, or counted.

102, 103. For the scansion, see Abbott, 511.

107. **devil**, monosyllabic. See Abbott, 466.

111. **Whether**, monosyllabic. **he was**, monosyllabic (h'was). See Abbott, 466, 461.

120. **trusted home**, trusted to the utmost, *i. e.*, "if you take this partial fulfilment as proof of the truth of the complete prophecy."

128, 129. **happy prologues.** "*Happy* is *auspicious*, like the Latin *felix; swelling* is *grand, imposing;* and *act* is *drama.* Thus the image is of the stage with an august drama of kingly state to be performed; the inspiring prologue has been spoken, and the glorious action is about to commence."—*Hudson.*

135. **unfix my hair.** Cf. V. v. 11–13, "and my fell of hair Would at a dismal treatise rouse and stir As life were in 't."

139. For the scansion, see Abbott, 467.

140. **single state of man.** 'Weak human condition' (Manly). "Man is compared to a kingdom or state, which may be described as 'single,' when all faculties are at one, or act in unison, undisturbed by conflicting emotions. . . . Or is 'single' used in a depreciatory sense, as in I. vi. 16?" (Clarendon).

147. **Time and the hour.** "Equivalent to 'time and tide' in which 'tide' does not mean the ebb and flow of the sea, but opportunity, time suitable."—*Richard Grant White.*

"A fatalistic sentiment in compressed phrase, which can only be explained by expansion: 'The roughest day comes to an end, the fated hour must strike, time sets all straight.'"—*Chambers.*

"There is no day so rough and confused but that everything happens at its appointed time and hour. . . . Macbeth seems . . . confident that fate controls human fortunes."—*Manly.*

147. **runs.** "The inflection in *s* is of frequent occurrence also when two or more singular nouns precede the verb" (Abbott).

155. **Our free hearts**, *i. e.*, let us speak our hearts freely.

Scene iv.

2. **Those in commission**, *i. e.*, those entrusted with the commission.

8. **the leaving it.** "*The* frequently precedes a verbal that is followed by an object" (Abbott, 93).

9. **had been studied**, a technical term of the theatre for getting up a part. "The behaviour of the thane of Cawdor corresponds in almost

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every circumstance with that of the unfortunate Earl of Essex. . . . His asking the Queen's forgiveness, his confession, repentance, and concern about behaving with propriety on the scaffold, are minutely described. Such an allusion could not fail of having the desired effect on an audience, many of whom were eye-witnesses to the severity of that justice which deprived the age of one of its greatest ornaments."—*Steevens.*

39. **The Prince of Cumberland.** The crown of Scotland was not at this time strictly hereditary, and when the successor to the reigning king was named he was given the title of the Prince of Cumberland.

45. **Harbinger**, a forerunner, an officer in the royal household, whose duty it was to allot and mark the lodgings of all the king's attendants in a 'royal progress.'

Scene v.

" *Reading a letter.* Clar. Pr. thinks she had read the letter before; perhaps so. But perhaps it is just as well to suppose that she is now reading it for the first time, but has already read several sentences when she comes upon the stage. It is to be remembered, however, that stage letters are not constructed on the principles followed in life. They contain merely what furnishes to the audience a plausible excuse for the possession by the recipient of certain information; they are, as it were, mere symbols of the transmission of information. Hence it is that in a play we often find a person in possession of facts not contained in a letter, although that letter was the only source of information."—*Manly.*

30. **doth seem.** Cf. note to I. iii. 147.

40. **entrance**, trisyllabic, ent(*e*)rance.

49. **ministers**, dissyllabic, see Abbott, **467.**

58. For the scansion, see Abbott, 484.

Scene vi.

"This short dialogue between Duncan and Banquo has always appeared to me a striking instance of what in painting is termed *repose* Their conversation very naturally turns upon the beauty of the situation, and the pleasantness of the air; and Banquo, observing the martlets' nests in every recess of the cornice, remarks that where those birds most breed and haunt the air is delicate. The subject of this quiet and easy conversation gives that repose so necessary to the mind after the tumultuous bustle of the preceding scenes, and perfectly contrasts the scene of horror that immediately succeeds."—*Sir Joshua Reynolds.*

"We come to the sixth scene, which has been instanced by a celebrated artist and critic—Sir Joshua Reynolds—as an example of relief, analogous to what is technically called repose in painting. The artist and critic I allude to considers this to be the effect of design on the part of Shakespeare—that it is intended by him to relax the tension, the extreme tension of that interest which has been hitherto excited in the audience, and kept constantly upon the strain. Notwithstanding the eloquence of the remark, and the ingenuity with which it is enforced, I

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am inclined to take a different view of the subject, and to consider this scene as another and a higher step in the climax of the action. That Duncan should contemplate with satisfaction the pleasant seat of Macbeth's castle, and that Banquo should participate in the feelings of the king, are perfectly natural; but that the audience should partake this view is as preposterous as to suppose that we could see a man about to step into a cavern which we know to be the den of a wild beast, and participate in his admiration of the foliage which might happen to adorn its entrance. So far, if I mistake not, from there being any relaxing of the interest here, there is an absolute straining of it. The unconsciousness of the destined victim to the fate that awaited it, the smiling flowers that dressed it, and its playful motions as it walked to the altar of sacrifice, must have served, not to assuage, but to aggravate in the beholder the feeling of its predicament. There is no relief, no repose here. How often, in witnessing this scene, have I felt a wish that some suspicion of foul play would flash across the mind of Banquo, and that he would hang upon the robes of the king and implore him not to enter."—*Sheridan Knowles.*

"Our poet . . . is thoroughly humane in introducing the repose which he here opens before us, in order to deepen the tragic pathos that follows."—*Franz Horn.*

"Perfect peace seems to welcome the doomed king to his kinsman's house. No startling omens; a light and cheerful air; martins building as on a temple, and 'securely hatching their young.' The poetic instinct is the same as that which makes Homer, in the *Iliad*, xxii. 126, introduce into Hector's bitter farewell to life the soft image of the 'youth and maiden conversing near some oak-tree or by some shadowy rock.' "—*Moberly.*

"In this scene the trustful, gentle nature of Duncan is used to emphasize by contrast the horror of the coming murder. The touches of natural description serve a similar purpose."—*Chambers.*

"The light-hearted talk of Duncan and Banquo, and the elaborate courtesies between Duncan and Lady Macbeth, suspend, as it were, for a moment, the progress of the tragedy; but in so doing, intensify the expectation of the audience."—*Manly.*

3. **gentle senses.** Strictly speaking, it is 'the air,' not 'our senses,' that is *gentle.* Shakspere often transfers epithets thus from the noun to which they are really appropriate to some other closely connected with it. Cf. 'purged the gentle weal,' III. iv. 76. According to Abbott, 471, the final *es* is frequently silent. In this case, then, *senses* is monosyllabic.

4. **The temple-haunting martlet.** "The martlet, as it is called in heraldry, or martin, is among the birds which in early summer come to England from the south of Europe and leave again in autumn. Its nest, which is made of mud, is always built beneath the eaves of houses, churches, etc.; hence it is here called temple-haunting, perhaps with

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the additional idea in that word of the peace and quiet to be found in such a building."—*Deighton.*

10-14. "Duncan's language is certainly tortuous. The course of the thought seems to be as follows.—I have accustomed myself to receive with demonstrations of gratitude even those expressions of my subjects' good-will which really I found tedious and troublesome. And now that I am troubling you with my presence and that of my train, I commend to you my own example, begging you to be thankful for my imposition of care upon you, in view of the fact that even this annoyance I sincerely intended as a token of love and honor."—*S. Thurber.*

16. **poor and single business.** "There is a whimsical likeness and logical connection between this phrase and one that has lately come into vulgar vogue, 'a *one-horse* affair,' 'a *one-horse* town,' etc." (White).

31. **By your leave, hostess.** "'Here Duncan gives his hand to Lady Macbeth, and leads her into the castle.' Some one has suggested that he kisses her, but if so, he was rather tardy in his salutation. Perhaps it is simply a phrase of courtesy accompanying his insistence that, although he is her king, she shall precede him through the door."—*Manly.*

Scene vii.

Enter a Sewer. "At first a sewer was a taster, to insure protection against poison; afterwards a sort of head groom of the kitchen" (White).

4. **his surcease.** The antecedent of *his* is by some taken to be *Duncan*, by others *assassination*, and by others *consequence*. The passage is thus paraphrased by Moberly, "If the murder could be like a net, taking in all consequences at a single haul, and bringing up, as the haul ceases, a conclusive and final success; if only the blow could end all apprehensions here in this life, shallow as it is, we might risk the life to come. But it is not so; besides the great future, there is a nearer future of temporal retribution, which we teach others to execute on ourselves."

25. **tears shall drown the wind.** Cf. 3 *Henry VI.* I. iv. 145, 146, "For raging wind blows up incessant showers And, when the rage allays, the rain begins."

As the wind often subsides when the shower begins, the tears of pity in every eye for this horrid deed shall drown the wind.

25-28. "Two metaphors jostle in lines 25-28; first ambition is a spur, then a rider. Read, temporarily, 'ambition' after 'only,' and then again in its right place, and all is clear."—*Helen Gray Cone.*

"There are two distinct metaphors. I have no spur to prick the sides of my intent: I have nothing to *stimulate* me to the execution of my purpose, but ambition, which is apt to overreach itself; this he expresses by the second image, of a person meaning to vault into his saddle, who, by taking too great a leap, will fall on the other side."—*Malone.*

28. For the scansion, see Abbott, 506.

37. **so green and pale,** "this refers to the wretched appearance that

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Hope presents on awaking from her drunkenness, and in consequence of it" (Delius).

43. **And live a coward.** "Do you wish to obtain the crown, and yet would you remain such a coward in your own eyes all your life as to suffer your paltry fears, which whisper, 'I dare not,' to control your noble ambition, which cries out, 'I would'?—*Steevens.*

45. **the poor cat.** "The cate would eate fishe, and would not wet her feete."

50. **to be more**, an 'infinitive indefinitely used' (Abbott, 356).

53. See Abbott, 239.

58. **the brains.** "We should now say 'its brains,' but 'the' is found not unfrequently for the possessive pronoun" (Clarendon).

59. **We fail!** Mrs. Jameson has written, "In her impersonation of the part of Lady Macbeth, Mrs. Siddons adopted successively three different intonations in giving the words *we fail.* At first a quick contemptuous interrogation—'*we fail?*' Afterwards with the note of admiration—'*we fail!*' and an accent of indignant astonishment, laying the principal emphasis on the word *we—we* fail! Lastly, she fixed on what I am convinced is the true reading—'we fail.' with the simple period, modulating her voice to a deep, low, resolute tone, which settled the issue at once—as though she had said, 'if we fail, why then we fail, and all is over.' This is consistent with the dark fatalism of the character and the sense of the line following, and the effect was sublime, almost awful."

60. **screw courage . . . sticking-place.** "A metaphor perhaps taken from the *screwing up* the chords of string-instruments to their degree of tension, when the peg remains fast in its *sticking-place, i.e.*, in the place from which it is not to move."—*Steevens*, quoted by Furness.

65–7. **That memory**, "so that memory, which keeps guard over the brain, shall become nothing better than a mere vapour, and the brain merely the alembic into which that vapour passes. By the old anatomists . . . the brain was divided into three ventricles, in the hindermost of which they placed the memory. The third ventricle is the cerebellum, by which the brain is connected with the spinal marrow and the rest of the body: the memory is posted in the cerebellum like a warder or sentinel to warn the reason against attack. When the memory is converted by intoxication into a mere fume it fills the brain itself, the receipt or receptacle of reason, which thus becomes like an alembic (a limbec) or cap of a still."

ACT II.

Scene i.

4–9. "The possible meanings of Banquo's *heavy summons*, and of his *cursed thoughts*, are most interesting subjects of discussion. Is it to be surmised that Banquo too has been contemplating the possibility of

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hastening by means of crime the consummation of the witches' prophecy in behalf of his family? Note his confession in line 20. Does anything in his subsequent conduct justify us in supposing that at this time he suspects Macbeth's intentions? What are the bearings, as regards this point, of his speech, 26–29? Try to find that explanation of Banquo's perturbation which shall be most consistent with the data furnished by the play."—*S. Thurber.*

4. **Hold, take my sword,** etc. Flathe comments on this speech as follows, "Banquo enters with his son Fleance, who holds a torch. Will not the man do something at last for his king, take some measures to prevent a cruel crime? Everything combines to enjoin the most careful watchfulness upon him, if duty and honour are yet quick within his breast; and here we come to a speech of Banquo's to his son to which we must pay special heed, since upon it the earlier English commentators, Steevens among them, have based their ridiculous theory that in this tragedy Banquo, in contrast to Macbeth, who is led astray, represents the man unseduced by evil. Steevens says that this passage shows that Banquo too is tempted by the witches in his dreams to do something in aid of the fulfilment of his hopes, and that in his waking hours he holds himself aloof from all such suggestions, and hence his prayer to be spared the 'cursed thoughts that nature gives way to in repose.'

"A stranger or more forced explanation of this passage can hardly be imagined. . . . As he has already done, Banquo here endeavours as far as possible to assert his own innocence to himself, while, for the sake of his future advantage, he intends to oppose no obstacle to the sweep of Macbeth's sword. It is, therefore, necessary that he should pretend to himself that here in Macbeth's castle no danger can threaten Duncan nor any one else. Therefore his sword need not rest by his side this night, and he gives it to his son. He must be able to say to himself, in the event of any fearful catastrophe, 'I never thought of or imagined any danger, and so I laid aside my arms.'

"And yet, try as he may, he cannot away with the stifling sensation of a tempest in the air, a storm-cloud destined to burst over Duncan's head this very night. He cannot but acknowledge to himself that a certain restless anxiety in his brain is urging him, in spite of his weariness, to remain awake during the remaining hours of the night. But this mood, these sensations, must not last, or it might seem a sacred duty either to hasten to the chamber of King Duncan or to watch it closely, that its occupant may be shielded from murderous wiles. To avoid this, Banquo denounces the thoughts of Macbeth that arise in his mind as 'cursed thoughts.' So detestably false are they that a merciful Power must be entreated to restrain them during sleep, when the mind is not to be completely controlled.

"With every change in the aspect of affairs Banquo's self-deceit appears in some new form. Banquo here banishes his thoughts from his mind, or rather maintains to himself that he has banished them, or that

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he must banish them because they do injustice to noble Macbeth, whom, nevertheless, he has thought it necessary to warn against the devil."

5. **Take thee that too.** 'thee is the dative' (Abbott, 212).

16. **shut up.** The passage is variously interpreted. Duncan *concluded* in measureless content, or shut up the day, or shut up himself, being enclosed or wrapped up, that is, in unbounded satisfaction. Hunter thinks that it was the diamond which was shut up, enclosed, that is, in its case.

19. **wrought,** dissyllabic.

20. **weird,** dissyllabic.

25. **consent, when 'tis.** Macbeth is purposely obscure. *My consent* may mean my plan or my party. Or, perhaps, Macbeth,—a passive recipient of the royal dignity, "If chance will have me king, why, chance may crown me,"—says to Banquo, "If you shall hold to what I *consent* to do, when 'tis done, it shall be to your advantage."

31. **My drink.** "This night cup or posset was an habitual indulgence of the time" (Elwin). Cf. II. ii. 6, 'I have drugg'd their possets.'

41. This line appears to be four syllables short, but the time is taken up by Macbeth's action in drawing his dagger.

51. **sleep,** dissyllabic.

52. **Hecate,** the goddess of hell,—one of the names of Artemis-Diana, as goddess of the infernal regions. In the Middle Ages she was regarded as the queen of witches.

61. **Words . . . gives.** For examples of this inflection, see Abbott, 333.

Scene ii.

21. "A stage direction will sometimes explain the introduction of a short line" (Abbott, 511).

"Den Worten Macbeth's (II. ii. 21): *This is a sorry sight* pflegt man allgemein auf seine blutbefleckten Hände zu beziehen. Schmidt meint, er denke an die Leiche Duncan's, die ihm noch gegenwärtig vor der Seele steht."—From a review in the (1895) *Jahrbuch d. d. Shakespeare-Gesellschaft* of a students' edition of *Macbeth*, edited by Immanuel Schmidt (Tauchnitz).

25. **prayers,** dissyllabic.

29, 30. A 'trimeter couplet.' See Abbott, 500.

40. **nourisher,** dissyllabic. See Abbott, 467.

57. **Whence is that knocking?** See comment by De Quincey in his *Essays* (quoted by Furness, p. 437), Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

63. See note to line 21 above.

73. **To know.** An 'infinitive indefinitely used' (Abbott, 356, 357).

Scene iii.

1. "The poet Schiller could not endure Shakespeare's Porter, but created a very different one of his own for his German Macbeth. The German porter sings beautiful verses in a lofty religious strain. Schil-

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ler's porter-scene should, by those who read German, by all means be looked up in the original; but Mr. Furness's translation in his Variorum edition of the play will suffice for those who must have it in English. Compare Schiller's porter with Shakespeare's. Is the beauty of Schiller's verses relevant to the question of their appropriateness in the play? Does the play, as a whole, gain by the change made by Schiller?"—*S. Thurber.*

2. **have old turning the key**, *i. e.*, be kept busy unlocking the door. *Old* is a colloquial intensive used to amplify the essential meaning of a noun. Cf. the 'old swearing' of *The Merchant of Venice*, IV. ii. 16, or the 'high old time' of modern slang.

5. **hanged himself . . . plenty.** Because prices would be low.

6. **napkins**, handkerchiefs.

7. **enow**, enough. *Enow* is used with plural nouns, *enough* with singular.

9. **th' other devil's name.** It has been suggested that he was trying to think of Belial, but was too befuddled to remember the name. A dash after *in* would make this clearer.

10. **quivocator**, probably alluding to Jesuitical equivocation; Garnet, the superior of the order, was on his trial in March, 1606.

12. **for God's sake**, in the name of God and on the principle that the end justifies the means. **quivocate to heaven**, get to heaven by equivocation.

15. **tailor . . . stealing.** It is an old joke that tailors always steal a part of the material furnished by their customers.

17. **goose.** "The tailor's smoothing iron is so called because its handle is like the neck of a goose" (Clarendon).

23. **remember the porter**, *i. e.*, with the customary gratuity.

62. **prophesying**, trisyllabic.

73. The confusion of metaphors in *anointed temple* is explained as due to a reference to two passages in the Bible, viz., "I will not put forth mine hand against my lord; for he is the LORD's anointed" (I. Sam. xxiv. 10), and "for ye are the temple of the living God" (II. Corinthians, vi. 16).

77. **a new Gorgon.** "It is fabled that there were three Gorgons, sisters, of whom Medusa, the youngest, was very handsome. Wishing to leave her home, a desolate land, she entreated Minerva to let her go and visit the delightful sunny south. When Minerva refused her request, she reviled the goddess, declaring that nothing but her conviction that mortals would no longer consider her beautiful, if they but once beheld Medusa, could have prompted this denial. This remark so incensed Minerva, that, to punish her for her vanity, the goddess changed Medusa's beautiful curling locks into hissing, writhing serpents, and decreed that one glance into her still beautiful face would suffice to turn the beholder into stone." See Guerber's *Myths of Greece and Rome*, or Gayley's *Classic Myths in English Literature.*

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83. **The great doom's image.** Cf. *King Lear*, V. iii. 264, "Is this the promised end?—Or image of that horror?"

117, 121. 'Language so forced,' etc. See Abbott, 529 (3).

124. **Help me hence.** Among the critical judgments quoted by Furness are the following,

"On Lady Macbeth's seeming to faint, while Banquo and Macduff are solicitous about her, Macbeth, by his unconcern, betrays a consciousness that the fainting is feigned."—*Whately.*

". . . we find not the smallest sign of attention paid to her situation by Macbeth himself, who, arguing from his own character to hers, might regard it merely as a dextrous feigning on her part."—*Fletcher.*

"It must not be imagined that there is any feigning here. The poet, in Lady Macbeth, gives another view of human nature steeped in sin from that portrayed in Macbeth himself. In her, as her former dreams prove mockeries and unreal, the whole mental organization receives an annihilating blow from that first deed of blood, beneath which it may stagger on for a while, but from which it can never entirely recover. For one moment, immediately after the deed, Lady Macbeth can overmaster her husband and stand defiantly erect, as if to challenge hell to combat. But this was but a momentary intoxication; it is even now over. She is already conscious that she can never banish from her breast the consciousness of her crime; she has found out that her wisdom, which spurned at reflection, is naught. The deed she has done stands clear before her soul in unveiled, horrible distinctness, and therefore she swoons away."—*Flathe.*

"Most editors suppose this fainting fit to be a pretence, but I am convinced that Sh. meant it to be real. Various causes have co-operated to beget in Lady Macbeth a revulsion of feeling, which, from henceforth constantly increasing, drives her at last to self-destruction. The first intimation we found in II. ii. 33, 34. She finds herself mistaken in her husband; a gulf has opened between him and her which nothing can hereafter bridge over. At the same time we perceive here the intimation of that internal and natural reaction of her overtaxed powers. Womanhood reasserts its rights."—*Bodenstedt.*

"Lady Macbeth's amiable powers give way and the swoon is real. It moreover gives us an intimation of her subsequent fate."—*Horn.*

127. **here**, dissyllabic.

Scene iv.

14. **horses.** "Probably the *s* is not sounded (*horse* is the old plural)." Abbott, 471.

31. **Scone,** "a city, now ruined, two miles north of Perth. It was the capital of the Pictish kings, and the coronation place of the kings of Scotland. The famous stone on which the rite was performed has been, since 1296, in Westminster Abbey."

33. **Colme-kill.** "This little island, only three miles long and one and a half broad, was once the most important spot of the whole cluster

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of British Isles. It was inhabited by Druids previous to the year 563, when Colum McFelim McFergus, afterwards called St. Columba, landed and began to preach Christianity. A monastery was soon established and a noble cathedral built, of which the ruins still remain. The reputation of these establishments extended over the whole Christian world for some centuries, and devotees of rank strove for admission into them; the records of royal deeds were preserved there, and there the bones of kings reposed."—*Knight.*

"Shakespeare uses freely what Mr. Ruskin regards as the device of a second-rate poet, the 'pathetic fallacy'—that is, he attributes to the inanimate things of nature a sympathy with the moods and passions of men. It is hard to understand Mr. Ruskin's objection; the 'pathetic fallacy' is but a weaker modern form of the view of nature on which most of Greek religion was based, and it is surely both a proper and a universal conception for poetry."—*Chambers.*

"The world must now proceed to purify itself of this stain. . . . 'The heavens, as troubled with man's act, threaten his bloody stage' . . . Duncan's horses . . . eating each other. . . . Nature not only pictures the moral confusion, but is herself confused and thrown into strife; a bad deed sets the whole universe ajar, which must re-act and rid itself of the discord."—*Snider.*

ACT III.

Scene i.

26. **the better.** "Banquo is perhaps regarding his horse as racing against night, and 'the better' means 'the better of the two'" (Abbott).

43. **The sweeter welcome.** Welcome may be a noun or an adjective. If an adjective, sweeter is an adverb, 'more sweetly.'

56. **Genius,** *i. e.*, his tutelar spirit. "For thy Demon, said he, (that is to say, the good angell and spirit that keepeth thee) is affraid of his: and being couragious and high when he is alone, becommeth feareful and timorous when he cometh near unto the other."—*North's Plutarch.* Cf. *Antony and Cleopatra,* II. iii. 18–22.

103. **worst,** dissyllabic.

105. **enemy,** dissyllabic.

122. **but wail,** *i. e.*, but I must bewail. "After *but* the finite verb is to be supplied *without* the negative" (Abbott).

Scene ii.

30. **remembrance,** quadrisyllabic, *i. e.*, rememb(*e*)rance.

41. **cloister'd flight.** "The bats wheeling round the dim cloisters of Queen's College, Cambridge, have frequently impressed on me the singular propriety of this original epithet" (Steevens).

42. **shard-borne,** borne by scaly wing-cases. Note the distinction drawn by Chambers between the picturesque in poetry and irrelevant

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facts in natural history, "**shard-borne.** So F 1, F 2. F 3, F 4 have *shard-born;* but such a divergence of spelling proves very little. I prefer 'borne upon shards' to 'born among shards,' because the one is part of the impression made by a beetle, as it flies by night; the other only an irrelevant fact of natural history. The one epithet is idle, the other picturesque."

Scene iii.

"This scene would have been little discussed but for the interest aroused in some minds in the question, 'Who was the third murderer?' Mr. A. P. Paton (*Notes and Qu.*, Sept. 11, and Nov. 13, 1869, and *Macbeth*, Hamnet ed., Edinb., 1877) argues that it was Macbeth himself (see for discussion *N. and Q.*, Oct. 2, Oct. 30, Nov. 13, Dec. 4, 1869); Mr. M. F. Libby (*Some New Notes on Macbeth*, Toronto, 1893) maintains that it was Ross, whom he regards as an ambitious intriguer and the chief spy and confidant of Macbeth. In reply to both these theories it may be briefly said that this is a play, and that plays do not contain puzzles, 'of which the audience is challenged to think out the meaning.' Mysteries there may be; not to be solved, however, but solely for the purpose of producing the effect of mystery. It is said that Shakspere emphasizes this mystery as a challenge to our ingenuity; but surely no more than he does the mystery as to the purpose and destination of Banquo's last ride. Where was he going? what was his purpose? was he plotting against Macbeth? had his purpose been innocent, would he have given such evasive answers as he did?—all these are questions for the spilling of ink, if one is to take upon him the mystery of things as if he were Shakspere's spy. But Banquo's destination is a matter of no consequence; he takes his ride merely in order that he may be killed as he returns. The third murderer is introduced to free the lying-in-wait from stiffness and artificiality, and to create in this scene the atmosphere of mystery which attends all the murders in the play. It is the introduction of persons and acts not absolutely necessary to the plot, and of allusions to events as occurring in extra-scenical time, which gives to Shakspere's plays the fulness and flexibility which have induced many to discuss them as if they were life itself."—*Manly.*

". . . and what I wish to contend is that this 'Attendant' [in III. i.] is the Third Murderer."—*Henry Irving.* See the *Nineteenth Century*, April, 1877.

12–14. Horn suggests that Shakspere introduces these lines to avoid introducing horses upon the stage. Horses were in fact introduced in this play according to the diary of Dr. Forman, who notes that Macbeth and Banquo were to be observed (I. iii. 37) 'riding through a wood.' But inasmuch as the horses of the Elizabethan stage were "hobby-horses, made by attaching to the rider's waist a framework representing the body and legs of a horse," it has been suggested that the falling of Banquo's horse when he was killed would be 'awkward,' and that this is probably the reason why the horses do not appear here.

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Scene iv.

11. Delius observes that Macbeth delays a moment because he has caught sight of the murderer and wishes to dismiss him.

34. **a-making**. See Abbott, 24, 140.

39. "The appearance of Banquo's ghost is the direct result of Macbeth's state of mind; the ghost is therefore visible only to him. Everything around and about Macbeth is, for Macbeth, as though it were not; the instant that Banquo's ghost rises, he is completely transported out of himself, and is engrossed solely with the creatures of his brain. The difficult task which the actor has before him, when portraying the effect upon Macbeth of this apparition, is to make us feel in every speech addressed to the ghost that mental horror of the soul, that demoniacal terror of the mind, which communicates itself with irresistible power to every expression of the face and voice. The more conscious Macbeth becomes of this irresistible power, by the reappearance of the ghost, the more horror-stricken does he grow, until at last he is completely unmanned. The gradually increasing effect of this apparition depends, therefore, upon the power the actor has of unfolding the mental distraction, the growing discord, in the soul of Macbeth. Most actors endeavour to portray this climax by mere physical strength of voice, by struggling as it were to make a more powerful impression upon the ghost, whereas the mental horror at the sight of an apparition can only be made truly manifest by the intense strength of a terror which one strives to repress. It is not the heightened voice of passion, growing ever louder and louder, but the trembling tones almost sinking to a whisper, that can give us the true picture of the power of the apparition in this scene. It is Macbeth's vain struggle to command himself, and the dark forces constantly bursting forth with increasing power from his internal consciousness, that we want to see portrayed by the revelation of his mental exhaustion, and by his control over face and voice weakened by mental terror. Thus alone can this scene be produced as it was in the mind of the poet; assuredly one of the greatest tasks ever set before an actor."—Rötscher, *Die Kunst der dramatischen Darstellung*, quoted by Furness.

Bucknill, in *The Mad Folk of Shakespeare*, affirms that the ghost is an hallucination, not an apparition. "Macbeth is at this juncture in a state of mind closely bordering upon disease, if he have not actually passed the limit. He is hallucinated, and, in respect to the appearance of Banquo, he believes in the hallucination, . . . The reality of the air-drawn dagger he did not believe in, but referred its phenomena to their proper source, . . . But between this time and the appearance of Banquo the stability of Macbeth's reason had undergone a fearful ordeal. He lacked 'the season of all natures—sleep'; or when he did sleep, it was

> 'In the affliction of those terrible dreams
> That shake us nightly.'

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Waking, he made his companions of the 'sorriest fancies'; and, 'on the torture of the mind,' he lay 'in restless ecstacy.' . . . In the point of view of psychological criticism, this fear [of his wife in II. ii. 34, 'so, it will make us mad'] appears on the eve of being fulfilled by the man, when to sleepless nights and days of brooding melancholy are added that undeniable indication of insanity, a credited hallucination. . . . Macbeth, however, saved himself from actual insanity by rushing from the maddening horrors of meditation into a course of decisive resolute action. From henceforth he gave himself no time to reflect; he made the firstlings of his heart the firstlings of his hand; he became a fearful tyrant to his country; but he escaped madness."

72. Cf. Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, ii. 8. 16,

"What herce or steed (said he) should he have dight,
But be entombed in the raven or the kite."

101. **arm'd**, encased in armor (*i. e.*, his impenetrable hide). **the Hyrcan tiger**, the tiger of Hyrcania, the Scythian wild south of the Caspian Sea.

123. **Stones.** Mr. Paton refers this to the 'rocking-stones' by which the Druids tested guilt. It was supposed that only the innocent could shake them. **trees to speak.** See the passage in the Æneid, iii. 19–68, in which the trees reveal to Æneas the murder of Polydorus.

124. **understood relations**, *i. e.*, "the connection of causes with effects; to *understand relations* as *an augur*, is to know how those things relate to each other which have no visible combination or dependence" (Johnson).

"The ethical world has been thrown into confusion by the guilt of Macbeth; now the movement sets in toward the restoration of its harmony. He who put down the traitor has himself become the successful traitor, and has secured his position by removing Banquo, who was next to him in greatness and in prospective power. But his own action is to be brought back to him; as he served traitors, so will he be served himself, and the circle of his deed will be made complete. The State and the social system which he has perverted by crime are to be purified; the ethical order of the world is to be vindicated; the man who introduces disturbance into it is to be eliminated. The process of this elimination will be shown in the Second Movement."—*Snider.*

Scene v.

13. **Loves.** "Interpreted in its ordinary sense, it is altogether out of harmony, not only with the character of Macbeth and his attitude toward the weird sisters, but equally so with the character of those uncanny but dignified beings. Assuming the scene to be an interpolation, however, this is at once recognizable as belonging to the class of ideas exploited in Middleton's *Witch;* there, indeed, gaining the bestial love of mortal men is the main object of thought and endeavor on the part of the witches."—*Manly.*

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ACT IV.

Scene i.

1. "The rich vocabulary, prodigal fancy, and terse diction displayed in iv. l. 1–38, show the hand of a master, and make us hesitate in ascribing the passage to any one but the master himself. There is, however, a conspicuous falling off in lines 39–47, after the entrance of Hecate" (Clarendon).

2. **Thrice and once.** "As *even numbers* were considered inappropriate to magical operations, the Second Witch makes the *fourth* cry of the hedge-pig an *odd number* by her method of counting" (Elwin). **hedge-pig.** "The urchin, or hedgehog, from its solitariness, the ugliness of its appearance, and from a popular opinion that it sucked or poisoned the udders of cows, was adopted into the demonologic system, and its shape was sometimes supposed to be assumed by mischievous elves" (Wharton).

3. "The cry of Harpier gives the final signal. 'Tis the precise, magical moment for beginning the incantation. All sorts of suggestions have been made as to the origin of the name Harpier: *Harpya*, a harpy; *habar*, to practise witchcraft; *harper*, a crab; *herpler*, a waddler. But, like dozens of names of familiar spirits, it seems to have no meaning; if it has one, it is certainly not worth finding out, for a significant name that does not exhibit its significance without the aid of a library is a failure on the stage. It is well to bear in mind that the unintelligible is a legitimate pigment in portraying the supernatural."—*Manly*.

14. **newt**, a kind of lizard; "properly *an ewt*, the initial *n* being borrowed from the indefinite article. Similarly formed words are 'nickname' for *an eke-name;* conversely, 'adder' (in l. 16) is properly *a nædre;* 'auger' (II. iii. 128), properly *a nauger*" (Deighton).

23. **mummy.** Cf. *Othello*, III. iv. 71–76,

> there's magic in the web of it;
> . . . . . .
> The worms were hallow'd that did breed the silk,
> And it was dyed in mummy which the skilful
> Conserv'd of maidens' hearts.

Nares (as quoted by Furness) notes that Egyptian mummy, or what passed for it, was formerly used as a medicine; and Sir Thomas Browne has said, "The Egyptian mummies which Cambyses or time hath spared, avarice now consumeth. Mummie is become merchandise, Mizraim cures wounds, and Pharaoh is sold for balsams." Elsewhere he writes, "The common opinion of the virtues of mummy bred great consumption thereof, and princes and great men contended for this strange panacea, wherein the Jews dealt largely, manufacturing mummies from dead carcases, and giving them the names of kings, while specifics were compounded from crosses and gibbit-leavings."

27. **yew.** The yew was considered poisonous.

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28. **moon's eclipse.** "In 1580, under Queen Elizabeth, there was set forth an 'order of prayer to avert God's wrath from us, threatened by the late terrible earthquake, to be used in all parish churches.' In connection with this there was also commended to the faithful 'a godly admonition for the time present'; and among the things referred to as evidence of God's wrath are comets, eclipses, and falls of snow."—*Andrew D. White.*

29. **Turk,**—"owing to the religious wars, the Turks were in those days looked upon as a hateful race, and to 'turn Turk' was a proverb for a complete change for the worse. **Tartar's.** The natives of Tartary (more properly Tatary) were supposed to be of a wild, savage disposition, and 'to catch a Tartar' became a proverb for meeting with more than one's match."—*Deighton.*

39–43. "These lines are in the style of act iii. sc. 5, and should, I think, be regarded as an interpolation. They are marked by the appearance of Hecate, by a change from trochaic to iambic metre, and by a song found in full in the *Witch*" (Chambers).

44. **By the pricking of my thumbs.** "It is a very ancient superstition that all sudden pains of the body, which could not naturally be accounted for, were presages of somewhat that was shortly to happen" (Steevens).

55. **Though bladed corn be lodged,** though corn in the blade be laid flat. The word *corn* applies in England to wheat, rye, oats, and barley; in Scotland to oats principally; in the United States to maize.

85. **pale-hearted.** Cf. II. ii. 65.

111, 112. **A show** (pantomime) **of eight Kings.** "Eight Stuart Kings, said to have been descended from Banquo, preceded James I., upon the throne of Scotland. His beheaded mother, Mary, was prudently left out of the show" (White).

121. **two-fold balls.** The golden ball, or orb, was symbolical of sovereignty, *i. e.*, of power over the earth. "'The two-fold balls' here mentioned probably refer to the double coronation of James, at Scone and at Westminster" (Clarendon). **treble sceptres.** "This was intended as a compliment to King James the First, who first united the two islands and the three kingdoms under one head; whose house also was said to be descended from Banquo" (Warburton). In regard to the 'treble sceptres,' however, Manly writes, "The treble sceptre is said by the editors to 'symbolize the three kingdoms, England, Scotland, and Ireland'; but if one may judge from the style and title assumed by James, this is incorrect; he was, after Oct. 24, 1604, 'The Most High and Mightie Prince, James, by the Grace of God, King of Great Britaine, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith.'"

125–132. "Another interpolation; and another confusion in the stage-directions. Hecate 'retired' at line 43, and has never re-entered since. The 'antic-round' is ludicrously incongruous here" (Chambers).

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Scene ii.

Schiller omitted this scene from his translation of *Macbeth*.

"To omit this scene, as is usually the case on the stage, is to present Macbeth's character in a far more favorable light than Sh. intended, and to weaken the force of Macduff's cry of agony, and Lady Macbeth's heart-piercing question in the sleep-walking scene."—*Bodenstedt*, quoted by Furness.

"Were it now to be set on the stage according to the prevailing taste, no small part of the public would be outraged to such a degree as to refuse to enter further into the horror of this tragedy; . . . the omission for the present may well be excused. The scene itself hovers on the extremest limit of tragedy, and is almost too horrible and harrowing."—*Horn*, quoted by Furness.

"This scene, dreadful as it is, is still a relief, because a variety, because domestic, and therefore soothing, as associated with the only real pleasures of life. The conversation between Lady Macduff and her child heightens the pathos, and is preparatory for the deep tragedy of their assassination."—*Coleridge*.

"The interview of Lady Macduff and Ross, the talk with the child, and the warning by the unknown messenger, are all intended to emphasize the massacre which follows, and to lend to the scene something of the full, natural flow of life. It has been argued that Ross is acting a double part, and is in reality the leader of the band of murderers; but, obscure as some of his speeches certainly are, I can see no support for such a theory; *cf.* Introd., p. xxi. That the unknown messenger was sent by Lady Macbeth is attractive, but hardly admits of serious discussion. . . . . The massacre of Macduff's wife and children so fills up the measure of Macbeth's evil deeds that not even his later somewhat movingly solitary and hopeless misery can interfere with the feeling of satisfaction—hardly of pleasure, I think—which the spectator has in his death."—*Manly*.

"Compare, as to their dramatic purpose, the little boy's prattle with his mother, and the soliloquy of the porter at the time of the murder of Duncan. How is the immense tragical effectiveness of the scene produced?"—*S. Thurber*.

Scene iii.

"The discussion between Malcolm and Macduff is not very interesting; it cannot be pleaded in its favor that it 'was needed to supplement the meagre parts assigned to Malcolm and Macduff,' for Malcolm is a mere lay figure, and is no less so because of this conversation; and the additions to Macduff's character that grow out of the conversation are not worth the time and space. The reason for its existence seems to be that," etc.—*Manly*.

146. **the evil.** "The reference, which has nothing to do with the progress of the drama, is introduced obviously in compliment to King

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James, who fancied himself endowed with the Confessor's powers. . . . Edward's miraculous powers were believed in by his contemporaries, or at least soon after his death, and expressly recognized by Pope Alexander III. who canonized him. The power of healing was claimed for his successors early in the twelfth century, for it is controverted by William of Malmesbury, and asserted later in the same century by Peter of Blois, who held a high office in the Royal household (See Freeman's *Norman Conquest*, vol. ii. pp. 527, 528). The same power was claimed for the kings of France, and was supposed to be conferred by the unction of the 'Sainte Ampoule' on their coronation. William Tooker, D. D., in his 'Charisma seu Donum Sanationis,' 1597, while claiming the power for his own sovereign, Elizabeth, concedes it also to the Most Christian King; but André Laurent, physician to Henry IV. of France, taxes the English sovereigns with imposture. His book is entitled, 'De Mirabili strumas sanandi vi solis Galliae Regibus Christianissimis divinitus concessa,' &c., 1609. The Roman Catholic subjects of Elizabeth, perhaps out of patriotism, conceded to her the possession of this one virtue, though they were somewhat staggered to find that she possessed it quite as much after the Papal excommunication as before. James the First's practice of touching for the evil is mentioned several times in Nichols's Progresses, e. g. vol. iii. pp. 264, 273. Charles I. when at York, touched seventy persons in one day. Charles II. also touched when an exile at Bruges, omitting perhaps, for sufficient reason, the gift of the coin. He practised with signal success after his restoration. One of Dr. Johnson's earliest recollections was the being taken to be touched by Queen Anne in 1712 (Boswell, vol. i. p. 38). Even Swift seems to have believed in the efficacy of the cure (*Works*, ed. Scott, ii. p. 252). The Whigs did not claim the power for the Hanoverian sovereigns, though they highly resented Carte's claiming it for the Pretender in his History of England" (Clarendon).

"A form of prayer to be used at the ceremony was introduced into the Book of Common Prayer as early as 1684, and was retained up to 1719. As late as 1745 Prince Charles at Holyrood touched a child for the evil" (Rolfe). See Macaulay, *History of England*, Chapter XIV.

"Delrio, *Disq. Mag.*, I, iii, § 4, p. 24ff., has a learned discussion of the whole subject, followed by an attempt to prove that, as Elizabeth was not of the true Church, her cures were either fictitious or accomplished by the aid of the devil."

153. "There is no warrant in Holinshed for the statement that the Confessor hung a golden coin or stamp about the necks of the patients. This was, however, a custom which prevailed in later days. Previously to Charles II's time some current coin, as an angel, was used for the purpose, but in Charles's reign a special medal was struck and called a 'touch-piece.' The identical touch-piece which Queen Anne hung round the neck of Dr. Johnson is preserved in the British Museum" (Clarendon).

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ACT V.

Scene i.

Can you give the poet's possible reasons for casting the dialogue of this scene in prose, and then for bringing back to verse the final speech of the doctor? Would you describe the tone of feeling in this scene as being raised above, or as being depressed below, the general level of the play?—*S. Thurber.*

"It has often struck me as a highly-significant fact, that the sleep-walking scene, which is more intensely tragic than any other scene in Shakespeare, is all, except the closing speech, written in prose. Why is this? The question is at least not a little curious. The diction is of the very plainest and simplest texture; yet what an impression of sublimity it carries! In fact, I suspect the matter is too sublime, too austerely grand, to admit of anything so artificial as the measured language of verse, even though the verse were Shakespeare's; and that the Poet, as from an instinct of genius, saw or felt that any attempt to heighten the effect by any such arts or charms of delivery would unbrace and impair it. And I think that the very diction of the closing speech, poetical as it is, must be felt by every competent reader as a letting-down to a lower intellectual plane. Is prose, then, after all, a higher form of speech than verse?"—*Hudson.*

Cf. the comment of Goethe on the prose scenes of the *Faust.* "Some of the scenes," he writes to Schiller, May 5, 1798, "were written in prose, and they are, in comparison with the rest, quite intolerable in their naturalness and force. So I am now trying to put them into rime, whereby then the idea will appear as through a vail, and the immediate effect of the monstrous matter will be subdued."

One scene, however, 'Dismal Day,' was left in prose.

The earlier dramas of Goethe, and of Schiller likewise, were written in prose; their later more mature work in verse. Goethe, indeed, rewrote several dramas, expressing in poetic form that which was originally written in prose.

See a brief note by Coleridge on the 'Wonderfulness of Prose' in *Shakespeare and Other Dramatists.*

56. **Here 's the smell of the blood still.** "It was, I believe, Madame de Stael who said, somewhat extravagantly, that the smell is the most poetical of the senses. It is true that the more agreeable associations of this sense are fertile in pleasing suggestions of placid, rural beauty, and gentle pleasures. . . . But the smell has never been successfully used as a means of impressing the imagination with terror, pity, or any of the deeper emotions, except in this dreadful sleep-walking scene of the guilty queen, and in one parallel scene of the Greek drama, as wildly terrible as this. It is that passage of the *Agamemnon* of Æschylus, where the captive prophetess Cassandra, wrapt in visionary inspiration, scents first the smell of blood, and then the vapors of the tomb breathing from

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the palace of Atrides, as ominous of his approaching murder."—*Verplanck.*

"Macbeth, if compared with Richard III, marks the marvellous advance of the dramatist's art in subtlety and impressive power. In both plays criminal ambition with its consequences forms the central theme. The hunchback king, at the crisis of his fate, feels the avenging power of the conscience which he had so long deliberately set at defiance. But the career of Macbeth and his wife presents a far more complex problem. Of conscience, in the strict sense, neither is possessed. And the dramatic crux was to exhibit the action of Nemesis in characters of this type. The conditions are satisfied by making the man the victim of his self-torturing imagination and the woman of her acutely nervous sensibilities. We thus realize that nature has reserve forces for the punishment of sin, when she cannot call conscience to her aid. So awful, indeed, is the retribution upon the guilty pair that it avails them as a partial atonement for their misdeeds. The criminal who cannot snatch even a moment of precarious joy from his crime, with whom the offence and the misery of it are simultaneous, has not reached the lowest depths of degradation. Hence it is that the career of Macbeth and his wife becomes fit material for tragedy, and that the contemplation of it purges the emotions through pity and terror. In chastened mood we look forward to the dawning of a new era for Scotland when Malcolm has been crowned at Scone."—*Boas.*

". . . the incomparable sleep-walking scene, which—whether it be properly motived or not—shows us in the most admirable manner how the sting of an evil conscience, even though it may be blunted by day, is sharpened again at night, and robs the guilty one of sleep and health."—*Brandes.*

Scene v.

44. "Whatever miracles protect such a man as Macbeth knows himself to be, must rest on some delusion; they are really the concealed instruments which are employed for his destruction. Fate is fond of irony. That Birnam Wood should move and hide in it an army for Macbeth's overthrow, is a prophecy setting forth, not victory, but the actual manner of his defeat. Then the expression, 'no man of woman born,' does not exclude, but hides the slayer; the prophecy really points out the very person who is to kill him. This is truly an 'equivocation of the fiend that lies like truth,' suggesting that the transgressor will escape the ethical law of the world, yet just therein leading him to punishment. Prophecy has two sides, one of ignorance and one of knowledge; the particular side we cannot know, it is in the future; but the universal side, the law, we can know, for it is eternal, present as well as future and past. We cannot know beforehand how Birnam Wood will move; but we know that it will move sooner than that the Law will move, and give to transgression immunity from the penalty."—*Snider.*

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Scene viii.

35. "The last forty lines of the play show evident traces of another hand than Shakespeare's. The double stage direction, '*Exeunt, fighting*'—'*Enter fighting, and Macbeth slaine,*' proves that some alteration had been made in the conclusion of the piece. Shakespeare, who has inspired his audience with pity for Lady Macbeth, and made them feel that her guilt has been almost absolved by the terrible retribution which followed, would not have disturbed this feeling by calling her a 'fiend-like queen'; nor would he have drawn away the veil which with his fine tact he had dropt over her fate, by telling us that she had taken off her life 'by self and violent hands'" (Clarendon).

THE END.

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